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CORPUS CHRISTI
COLLEGE.

OXFORD

BY

ANDREW LANG M.A.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE OXFORD

NEW EDITION

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

A. M. LEE

PREFACE

THESE papers do not profess even to sketch the outlines of a history of Oxford. They are merely records of the impressions made by this or that aspect of the life of the University, as it has been in different ages. Oxford is not an easy place to design in black and white, with the pen or the etcher's needle. On a wild winter or late autumn day (such as Father Faber has made permanent in a beautiful poem) the sunshine fleets along the plain, revealing towers, and floods, and trees, in a gleam of watery light, and leaving them once more in shadow. The melancholy mist creeps over the city, the damp soaks into the heart of everything, and such suicidal weather ensues as has been

described, once for all, by the author of *John-a-Dreams*. How different Oxford looks when the road to Cowley Marsh is dumb with dust, when the heat seems almost tropical, and by the drowsy banks of the Cherwell you might almost expect some shy southern water-beast to come crashing through the reeds! And such a day, again, is unlike the bright weather of late September, when all the gold and scarlet of Bagley Wood are concentrated in the leaves that cover the walls of Magdalen with an imperial vesture.

Our memories of Oxford, if we have long made her a Castle of Indolence, vary no less than do the shifting aspects of her scenery. Days of spring and of mere pleasure in existence have alternated with days of gloom and loneliness, of melancholy, of resignation. Our mental pictures of the place are tinged by many moods, as the landscape is beheld in shower and sunshine, in frost, and in the

colourless drizzling weather. Oxford, that once seemed a pleasant porch and entrance into life, may become a dingy ante-room, where we kick our heels with other weary, waiting people. At last, if men linger there too late, Oxford grows a prison, and it is the final condition of the loiterer to take 'this for a hermitage.' It is well to leave the enchantress betimes, and to carry away few but kind recollections. If there be any who think and speak ungently of their *Alma Mater*, it is because they have outstayed their natural 'welcome while,' or because they have resisted her genial influence in youth.

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I

THE TOWN BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY

OXFORD

I

THE TOWN BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY

Most old towns are like palimpsests, parchments which have been scrawled over again and again, by their successive owners. Oxford, though not one of the most ancient of English cities, shows, more legibly than the rest, the handwriting, as it were, of many generations. The convenient site among the interlacing waters of the Isis and the Cherwell has commended itself to men in one age after another. Each generation has used it for its own purpose: for war, for trade, for learning, for religion; and war, trade, religion, and learning have left on Oxford their peculiar marks. No set of its

occupants, before the last two centuries began, was very eager to deface or destroy the buildings of its predecessors. Old things were turned to new uses, or altered to suit new tastes; they were not overthrown and carted away. Thus, in walking through Oxford, you see everywhere, in colleges, chapels, and churches, doors and windows which have been builded up; or again, openings which have been cut where none originally existed. The upper part of the round Norman arches in the Cathedral has been preserved, and converted into the circular bull's-eye lights which the last century liked. It is the same everywhere, except where modern restorers have had their way. Thus the life of England, for some eight centuries, may be traced in the buildings of Oxford. Nay, if we are convinced by some antiquaries, the eastern end of the High Street contains even earlier scratches on this palimpsest of Oxford; the rude marks of savages who scooped out their damp nests, and raised their low walls in the gravel, on

the spot where the new schools are to stand. Here, half-naked men may have trapped the beaver in the Cherwell, and hither they may have brought home the boars which they slew in the trackless woods of Headington and Bagley. It is with the life of historical Oxford, however, and not with these fancies, that we are concerned, though these papers have no pretension to be a history of Oxford. A series of pictures of men's life here is all they try to sketch.

It is hard, though not impossible, to form a picture in the mind of Oxford as she was when she is first spoken of by history. What she may have been when legend only knows her; when St. Frideswyde built a home for religious maidens; when she fled from King Algar and hid among the swine, and after a whole fairy tale of adventures died in great sanctity, we cannot even guess. This legend of St. Frideswyde, and of her foundation, the germ of the Cathedral and of Christ Church, is not, indeed, without its value and significance for those who care for

Oxford. This home of religion and of learning was a home of religion from the beginning, and her later life is but a return, after centuries of war and trade, to her earliest purpose. What manner of village of wooden houses may have surrounded the earliest rude chapels and places of prayer, we cannot readily guess, but imagination may look back on Oxford as she was when the *English Chronicle* first mentions her. Even then it is not unnatural to think, Oxford might well have been a city of peace. She lies in the very centre of England, and the Northmen, as they marched inland, burning church and cloister, must have wandered long before they came to Oxford. On the other hand, the military importance of the site must have made it a town that would be eagerly contended for. Any places of strength in Oxford would command the roads leading to the north and west, and the secure, raised paths that ran through the flooded fens to the ford or bridge, if bridge there then was, between Godstowe and the later Norman

GODSTOWE.

grand pont, where Folly Bridge now spans the Isis. Somewhere near Oxford, the roads that ran towards Banbury and the north, or towards Bristol and the west, would be obliged to cross the river. The water-way, too, and the paths by the Thames' side, were commanded by Oxford. The Danes, as they followed up the course of the Thames from London, would be drawn thither, sooner or later, and would covet a place, which is surrounded by half-a-dozen deep natural moats. Lastly, Oxford lay in the centre of England indeed, but on the very marches of Mercia and Wessex. A border town of natural strength and of commanding situation, she can have been no mean or poor collection of villages, in the days when she is first spoken of, when Eadward the Elder 'incorporated with his own kingdom the whole Mercian lands on both sides of Watling Street' (Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. i. p. 57), and took possession of London and of Oxford as the two most important parts of a scientific frontier. If any man had stood in the days

of Eadward, on the hill that was not yet 'Shotover,' and had looked along the plain to the place where the grey spires of Oxford are clustered now, as it were in a purple cup of the low hills, he would have seen little but 'the smoke floating up through the oakwood and the coppice,'

Καπνὸν δ' ἐνὶ μέσσῃ
ἔδρακεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην.

The low hills were not yet cleared, nor the fens and the wolds trimmed and enclosed. Centuries later, when the early students came, they had to ride 'through the thick forest and across the moor, to the East Gate of the city' (*Munimenta Academica*, Oxon., vol. i. p. 60). In the midst of a country still wild, Oxford was already no mean city; but the place where the hostile races of the land met to settle their differences, to feast together and forget their wrongs over the mead and ale, or to devise treacherous murder, and close the banquet with fire and sword.

Again and again, after Eadward the Elder

A VIEW
OF
OXFORD.

took Mercia the Danes went about burning and wasting England. The wooden towns were flaming through the night, and sending up a thick smoke through the day, from Thames-mouth to Cambridge. 'And next was there no headman that force would gather, and each fled as swift as he might, and soon was there no shire that would help another.' When the first fury of the plundering invaders was over, when the Northmen had begun to wish to settle and till the land, and have some measure of peace, the early meetings between them and the English rulers were held in the border-town, in Oxford. Thus Sigeferth and Morkere, sons of Earngrim, came to see Eadric in Oxford, and there were slain at a banquet, while their followers perished in the attempt to avenge them. 'Into the tower of St. Frideswyde they were driven, and as men could not drive them thence, the tower was fired, and they perished in the burning.' So says William of Malmesbury, who, so many years later, read the story, as he says, in the

records of the Church of St. Frideswyde. There is another version of the story in the *Codex Diplomaticus* (DCCIX.). Aethelred is made to say, in a deed of grant of lands to St. Frideswyde's Church ('mine own minster'), that the Danes were slain in the massacre of St. Brice. On that day Aethelred, 'by the advice of his satraps, determined to destroy the tares among the wheat, the Danes in England.' Certain of these fled into the minster, as into a fortress, and therefore it was burned and the books and monuments destroyed. For this cause Aethelred gives lands to the minster, 'fro Charwell brigge andlong the streame, fro Merewell to Rugslawe, fro the lawe to the foule putte,' and so forth. It is pleasant to see how old are the familiar names 'Cherwell,' 'Hedington,' 'Couclee' or Cowley, where the college cricket-grounds are. Three years passed, and the headmen of the English and of the Danes met at Oxford again, and more peacefully, and agreed to live together, obedient to the laws of Eadgar;

to the law, that is, as it was administered in older days, that seem happier and better ruled to men looking back on them from an age of confusion and bloodshed. At Oxford, too, met the peaceful gathering of 1035, when Danish and English claims were in some sort reconciled, and at Oxford Harold Harefoot, the son of Cnut, died in March 1040. The place indeed was fatal to kings, for St. Frideswyde, in her anger against King Algar, left her curse on it. Just as the old Irish kings were forbidden by their customs to do this or that, to cross a certain moor on May morning, or to listen to the winnowing of the night-fowl's wings in the dusk above the lake of Tara; so the kings of England shunned to enter Oxford, and to come within the walls of Frideswyde the maiden. Harold died there, as we have seen, but there he was not buried. His body was laid at Westminster, where it could not rest, for his enemies dug it up, and cast it forth upon the fens, or threw it into the river. Many years later, when Henry III.

entered Oxford, not without fear, the curse of Frideswyde lighted also upon him. He came in 1263, with Edward the prince, and misfortune fell upon him, so that his barons defeated and took him prisoner at the battle of Lewes. The chronicler of Oseney Abbey mentions his contempt of superstitions, and how he alone of English kings entered the city: '*Quod nullus rex attemptavit a tempore Regis Algari*,' an error, for Harold *attemptavit*, and died. When Edward I. was king, he was less audacious than his father, and in 1275 he rode up to the East Gate and turned his horse's head about, and sought a lodging outside the town, *reflexis habenis equitans extra mœnia aulam regiam in suburbio positam introivit*. In 1280, however, he seems to have plucked up courage and attended a Chapter of Dominicans in Oxford.

The last of the meetings between North and South was held at Oxford in October 1065. '*In urbe quæ famoso nomine Oxnaford nuncupatur*,' to quote a document of

FOLLY
BRIDGE.

Cnut's. (*Cod. Dipl.* DCCXLVI. in 1042.) There the Northumbrian rebels met Harold in the last days of Edward the Confessor. With this meeting we leave that Oxford before the Conquest, of which possibly not one stone, or one rafter, remains. We look back through eight hundred years on a city, rich enough, it seems, and powerful, and we see the narrow streets full of armed bands of men—men that wear the cognisance of the horse or of the raven, that carry short swords, and are quick to draw them; men that dress in short kirtles of a bright colour, scarlet or blue; that wear axes slung on their backs, and adorn their bare necks and arms with collars and bracelets of gold. We see them meeting to discuss laws and frontiers, and feasting late when business is done, and chaffering for knives with ivory handles, for arrows, and saddles, and wadmal, in the booths of the citizens. Through the mist of time this picture of ancient Oxford may be distinguished. We are tempted to think of a low, grey twilight above that

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wet land suddenly lit up with fire; of the tall towers of St. Frideswyde's Minster flaring like a torch athwart the night; of poplars waving in the same wind that drives the vapour and smoke of the holy place down on the Danes who have taken refuge there, and there stand at bay against the English and the people of the town. The material Oxford of our times is not more unlike the Oxford of low wooden booths and houses, and of wooden spires and towers, than the life led in its streets was unlike the academic life of to-day. The Conquest brought no more quiet times, but the whole city was wrecked, stormed, and devastated, before the second period of its history began, before it was the seat of a Norman stronghold, and one of the links of the chain by which England was bound. 'Four hundred and seventy-eight houses were so ruined as to be unable to pay taxes,' while, 'within the town or without the wall, there were but two hundred and forty-three houses which did yield tribute.'

With the buildings of Robert D'Oily, a

OXFORD
CASTLE.

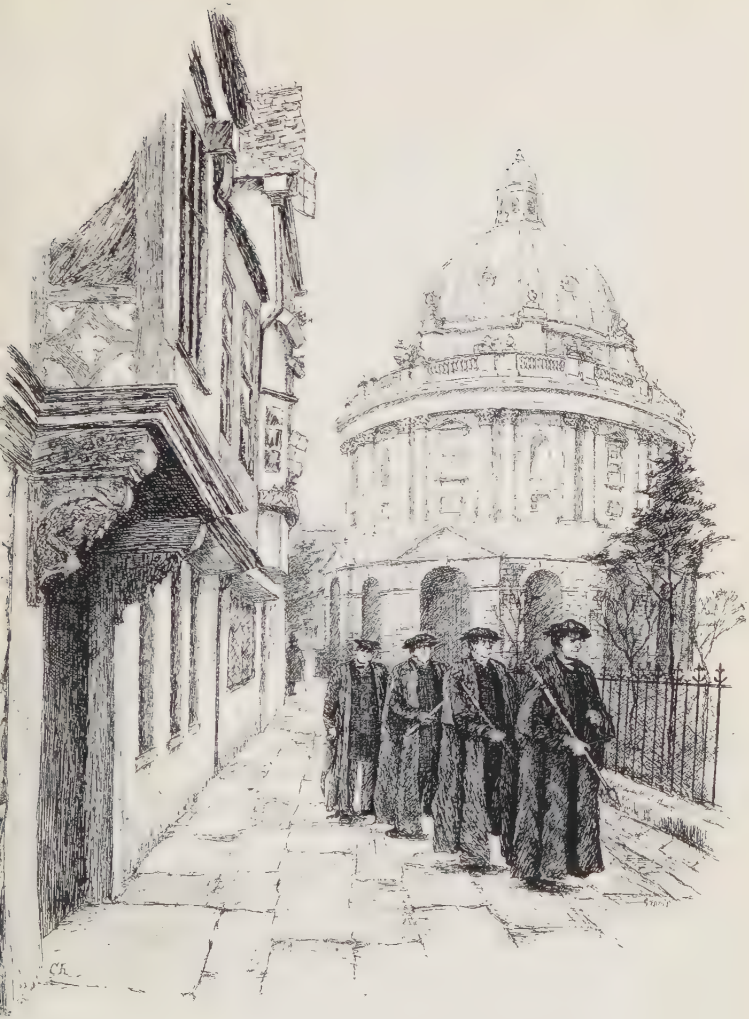
follower of the Conqueror's, and the husband of an English wife, the heiress of Wigod of Wallingford, the new Oxford begins. Robert's work may be divided roughly into two classes. First, there are the strong places he erected to secure his possessions, and, second, the sacred places he erected to secure the pardon of Heaven for his robberies. Of the castle, and its 'shining coronal of towers,' only one tower remains. From the vast strength of this picturesque edifice, with the natural moat flowing at its feet, we may guess what the castle must have been in the early days of the Conquest, and during the wars of Stephen and Matilda. We may guess, too, that the burghers of Oxford, and the rustics of the neighbourhood, had no easy life in those days, when, as we have seen, the town was ruined, and when, as the extraordinary thickness of the walls of its remaining tower demonstrates, the castle was built by new lords who did not spare the forced labour of the vanquished. The strength of the position of the castle is

best estimated after viewing the surrounding country from the top of the tower. Through the more modern embrasures, or over the low wall round the summit, you look up and down the valley of the Thames, and gaze deep into the folds of the hills. The prospect is pleasant enough, on an autumn morning, with the domes and spires of modern Oxford breaking, like islands, through the sea of mist that sweeps above the roofs of the good town. In the old times, no movement of the people who had their fastnesses in the fens, no approach of an army from any direction could have evaded the watchman. The towers guarded the fords and the bridge and were themselves almost impregnable, except when a hard winter made the Thames, the Cherwell, and the many deep and treacherous streams passable, as happened when Matilda was beleaguered in Oxford. This natural strength of the site is demonstrated by the vast mound within the castle walls, which tradition calls the Jews' Mound, but which is probably earlier

than the Norman buildings. Some other race had chosen the castle site for its fortress in times of which we know nothing. Meanwhile, some of the practical citizens of Oxford wish to level the Jews' Mound, and to 'utilise' the gravel of which it is largely composed. There is nothing to be said against this economic project, which could interest or affect the persons who entertain it. M. Brunet-Debaines' illustration shows the mill on a site which must be as old as the tower. Did the citizens bring their corn to be tolled and ground at the lord's mill?

Though Robert was bent on works of war, he had a nature inclined to piety, and, his piety beginning at home, he founded the church of St. George within the castle. The crypt of the church still remains, and is not without interest for persons who like to trace the changing fortunes of old buildings. The site of Robert's Castle is at present occupied by the County Gaol. When you have inspected the tower (which does not do service as a dungeon) you

are taken, by the courtesy of the Governor, to the crypt, and satisfy your archæological curiosity. The place is much lower, and worse lighted, than the contemporary crypt of St. Peter's-in-the-East, but not, perhaps, less interesting. The square-headed capitals have not been touched like some of those in St. Peter's, by a later chisel. The place is dank and earthy, but otherwise much as Robert D'Oily left it. There is an odd-looking arrangement of planks on the floor. It is *the new drop*, which is found to work very well, and gives satisfaction to the persons who have to employ it. Sinister the Norman castle was in its beginning, 'it was from the castle that men did wrong to the poor around them; it was from the castle that they bade defiance to the king, who, stranger and tyrant as he might be, was still a protector against smaller tyrants.' Sinister the castle remains; you enter it through ironed and bolted doors, you note the prisoners at their dreary exercises, and, when you have



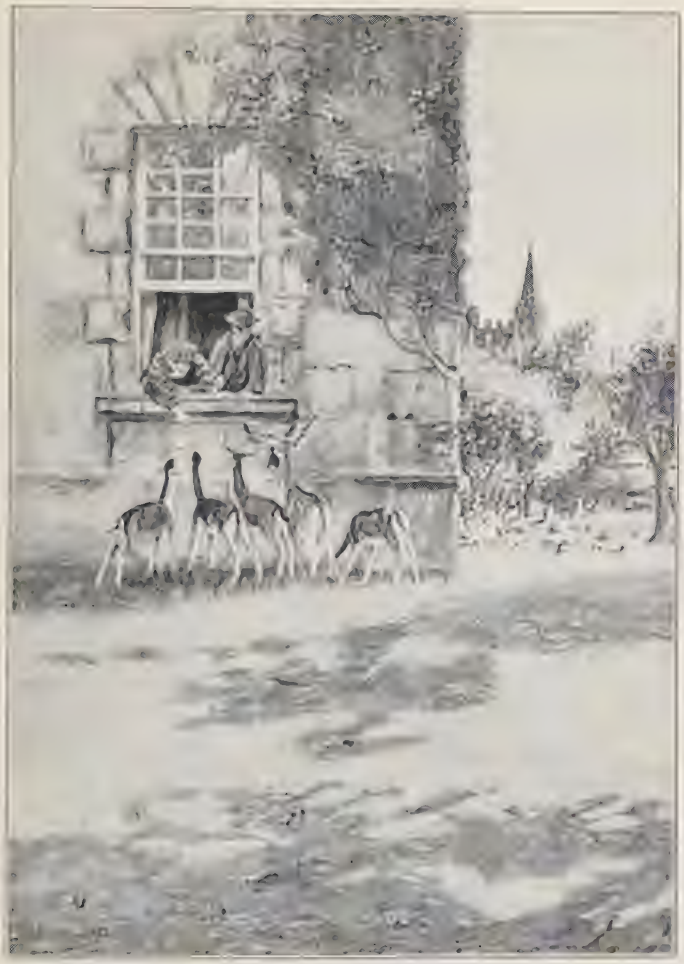
HE
ADCLIFFE.

seen the engines of the law lying in the old crypt you pass out into the place of execution. Here, in a corner made by Robert's tower and by the wall of the prison, is a dank little quadrangle. The ground is of the yellow clay and gravel which floors most Oxford quadrangles. A few letters are scratched on the soft stone of the wall —the letters 'H. R.' are the freshest. These are the initials of the last man who suffered death in this corner—a young rustic who had murdered his sweetheart. 'H. R.' on the prison wall is all his record, and his body lies under your feet, and the feet of the men who are to die here in after days pass over his tomb. It is thus that malefactors are buried, 'within the walls of the gaol.'

One is glad enough to leave the remains of Robert's place of arms—as glad as Matilda may have been when 'they let her down at night from the tower with ropes, and she stole out, and went on foot to Wallingford.' Robert seems at first to have

made the natural use of his strength. 'Rich he was, and spared not rich or poor, to take their livelihood away, and to lay up treasures for himself.' He stole the lands of the monks of Abingdon, but of what service were moats, and walls, and dungeons, and instruments of torture, against the powers that side with monks?

The *Chronicle of Abingdon* has a very diverting account of Robert's punishment and conversion. 'He filched a certain field without the walls of Oxford that of right belonged to the monastery, and gave it over to the soldiers in the castle. For which loss the Brethren were greatly grieved — the Brethren of Abingdon. Therefore, they gathered in a body before the altar of St. Michael—the very altar that St. Dunstan the archbishop dedicated—and cast themselves weeping on the ground, accusing Robert D'Oily, and praying that his robbery of the monastery might be avenged, or that he might be led to make atonement.' So, in a dream, Robert saw himself taken before



THE
DEER PARK,
MAGDALEN.

Our Lady by two brethren of Abingdon, and thence carried into the very meadow he had coveted, where 'most nasty little boys,' *turpissimi pueri*, worked their will on him. Thereon, Robert was terrified and cried out, and wakened his wife, who took advantage of his fears, and compelled him to make restitution to the Brethren.

After this vision, Robert gave himself up to pampering the monastery and performing other good works. He it was who built a bridge over the Isis, and he restored the many ruined parish churches in Oxford—churches which, perhaps, he and his men had helped to ruin. The tower of St. Michael's, in 'the Corn,' is said to be of his building; perhaps he only 'restored' it, for it is in the true primitive style—gaunt, unadorned, with round-headed windows, good for shooting from with the bow. St. Michael's was not only a church, but a watch-tower of the city wall; and here the old north-gate, called Bocardo, spanned the street. The rooms above the gate were used till within quite

recent times, and the poor inmates used to let down a greasy old hat from the window in front of the passers-by, and cry 'Pity the Bocardo birds':

> 'Pigons qui sont en l'essoine,
> Enserrez soubz trappe volière,'

as a famous Paris student, François Villon, would have called them. Of Bocardo no trace remains, but St. Michael's is likely to last as long as any edifice in Oxford. Our illustrations represent it as it was in the last century. The houses huddle up to the church, and hide the lines of the tower. Now it stands out clear, less picturesque than it was in the time of Bocardo prison. Within the last two years the windows have been cleared, and the curious and most archaic pillars, shaped like balustrades, may be examined. It is worth while to climb the tower and remember the times when arrows were sent like hail from the narrow windows on the foes who approached Oxford from the north, while prayers for their confusion were read in the church below.

ISIS AND OXFORD
CANAL.

That old Oxford of war was also a trading town. Nothing more than the fact that it was a favourite seat of the Jews is needed to prove its commercial prosperity. The Jews, however, demand a longer notice in connection with the still unborn University. Meanwhile, it may be remarked that Oxford trade made good use of the river. The *Abingdon Chronicle* (ii. 129) tells us that 'from each barque of Oxford city, which makes the passage by the river Thames past Abingdon, a hundred herrings must yearly be paid to the cellarer. The citizens had much litigation about land and houses with the abbey, and one Roger Maledoctus (perhaps a very early sample of the pass-man) gave Abingdon tenements within the city.' Thus we leave the pre-Academic Oxford a flourishing town, with merchants and moneylenders. As for the religious, the Brethren of St. Frideswyde had lived but loosely (*pro libito viverunt*), says William of Malmesbury, and were to be superseded by regular canons, under the headship of one Guimond,

and the patronage of the Bishop of Salisbury. Whoever goes into Christ Church new buildings from the river-side, will see, in the old edifice facing him, a certain bulging in the wall. That is the mark of the pulpit, whence a brother used to read aloud to the brethren in the refectory of St. Frideswyde. The new leaven of learning was soon to ferment in an easy Oxford, where men lived *pro libito*, under good lords, the D'Oilys, who loved the English, and built, not churches and bridges only, but the great and famous Oseney Abbey, beyond the church of St. Thomas, and not very far from the modern station of the Great Western Railway. Yet even after public teaching in Oxford certainly began, after Master Robert Puleyn lectured in divinity there (1133; cf. *Oseney Chronicle*), the tower was burned down by Stephen's soldiery in 1141 (*Oseney Chronicle*, p. 24).

II

THE EARLY STUDENTS—A DAY WITH A MEDIEVAL UNDERGRADUATE

II

THE EARLY STUDENTS—A DAY WITH A MEDIEVAL UNDERGRADUATE

OXFORD, some one says, 'is bitterly historical.' It is difficult to escape the fanaticism of Antony Wood, and of 'our antiquary,' Bryan Twyne, when one deals with the obscure past of the University. Indeed it is impossible to understand the strange blending of new and old at Oxford—the old names with the new meanings—if we avert our eyes from what is 'bitterly historical.' For example, there is in most, perhaps in all, colleges a custom called 'collections.' On the last days of term undergraduates are called into the Hall, where the Master and the Dean of the Chapel sit in solemn state. Examination papers are set but no

one heeds them very much. The real ordeal is the awful interview with the Master and the Dean. The former regards you with the eyes of a judge, while the Dean says, 'Master, I am pleased to say that Mr. Brown's *papers* are very fair, very fair. But in the matters of *chapels* and of *catechetics*, Mr. Brown sets—for a *scholar*—a very bad example to the other undergraduates. He has only once attended divine service on Sunday morning, and on that occasion, Master, his dress consisted exclusively of a long great-coat and a pair of boots.' After this accusation the Master will turn to the culprit and observe, with emphasis ill represented by italics, 'Mr. Brown, the *College* cannot hear with pleasure of such behaviour on the part of a *scholar*. You are *gated*, Mr. Brown, for the first fortnight of next term.' Now why should this tribunal of the Master and the Dean, and this dread examination, be called collections? Because (*Munimenta Academica*, Oxon., i. 129) in 1331 a statute was passed to the effect that 'every scholar

COMMEMORATION
OUTSIDE
THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE.

shall pay at least twelve pence a-year for lectures in logic, and for physics eighteenpence a-year,' and that 'all Masters of Arts except persons of royal or noble family, shall be obliged to *collect* their salary from the scholars.' This *collection* would be made at the end of term; and the name survives, attached to the solemn day of doom we have described, though the college dues are now collected by the bursar at the beginning of each term.

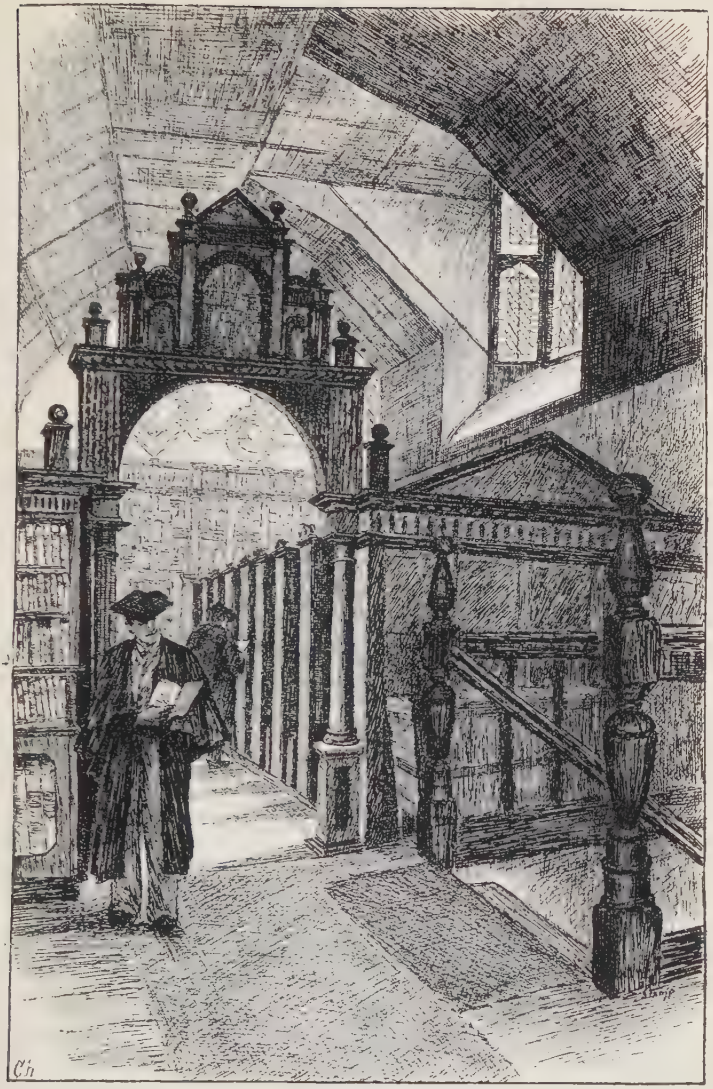
By this trivial example the perversions of old customs at Oxford are illustrated. To appreciate the life of the place, then, we must glance for a moment at the growth of the University. As to its origin, we know absolutely nothing. That Master Puleyn began to lecture there in 1133 we have seen; and it is not likely that he would have chosen Oxford if Oxford had possessed no schools. About these schools, however, we have no information. They may have grown up out of the seminary which, perhaps, was connected with St. Frideswyde's, just as Paris

University may have had some connection with 'the School of the Palace.' Certainly to Paris University the academic corporation of Oxford, the *Universitas*, owed many of her regulations; while, again, the founder of the college system, Walter de Merton (who visited Paris in company with Henry III.), may have compared ideas with Robert de Sorbonne, the founder of the college of that name. In the early Oxford, however, of the twelfth and most of the thirteenth centuries, colleges with their statutes were unknown. The University was the only corporation of the learned, and she struggled into existence after hard fights with the town, the Jews, the Friars, the Papal courts. The history of the University begins with the thirteenth century. She may be said to have come into being as soon as she possessed common funds and rents, as soon as fines were assigned, or benefactions contributed to the maintenance of scholars. Now the first recorded fine is the payment of fifty-two shillings by the townsmen of Oxford as part of

the compensation for the hanging of certain clerks. In the year 1214 the Papal Legate, in a letter to his 'beloved sons in Christ, the burgesses of Oxford,' bade them excuse the 'scholars studying in Oxford' half the rent of their halls, or hospitia, for the space of ten years. The burghers were also to do penance, and to feast the poorer students once a-year; but the important point is, that they had to pay that large yearly fine 'propter suspendium clericorum'—all for the hanging of the clerks. Twenty-six years after this decision of the Legate, Robert Grossteste, the great Bishop of Lincoln, organised the payment and distribution of the fine, and founded the first of the *chests*, the chest of St. Frideswyde. These *chests* were a kind of Mont de Piété, and to found them was at first the favourite form of benefaction. Money was left in this or that *chest*, from which students and masters would borrow, on the security of pledges, which were generally books, cups, daggers, and so forth.

Now, in this affair of 1214 we have a

strange passage of history, which happily illustrates the growth of the University. The beginning of the whole affair was the quarrel with the town, which, in 1209, had hanged two clerks, 'in contempt of clerical liberty.' The matter was taken up by the Legate—in those bad years of King John the Pope's viceroy in England—and out of the humiliation of the town the University gained money, privileges, and halls at low rental. These were precisely the things that the University wanted. About these matters there was a constant strife, in which the Kings, as a rule, took part with the University. The University possessed the legal knowledge, which the monarchs liked to have on their side, and was therefore favoured by them. Thus, in 1231 (Wood, *Annals,* i. 205), 'the King sent out his Breve to the Mayor and Burghers commanding them not to overrate their houses'; and thus gradually the University got the command of the police, obtained privileges which enslaved the city, and became masters



THE
LIBRARY,
MERTON.

where they had once been despised, starveling scholars. The process was always the same. On the feast of St. Scholastica, for example, in 1354, Walter de Springheuse, Roger de Chesterfield, and other clerks, swaggered into the Swyndlestock tavern in Carfax, began to speak ill of John de Croydon's wine, and ended by pitching the tankard at the head of that vintner. In ten minutes the town bell at St. Martin's was rung, and the most terrible of all Town-and-Gown rows began. The Chancellor could do no less than bid St. Mary's bell reply to St. Martin's, and shooting commenced. The Gown held their own very well at first, and 'defended themselves till Vespertide,' when the citizens called in their neighbours, the rustics of Cowley, Headington, and Hincksey. The results have been precisely described in anticipation by Homer:—

τόφρα δ' ἄρ' οἰχόμενοι Κίκονες Κικόνεσσι γεγώνευν
οἳ σφῖν γείτονες ἦσαν ἅμα πλέονες καὶ ἀρείους
. . . . . .
ἦμος δ' ἠέλιος μετενίσσετο βουλυτόνδε
καὶ τότε δὴ Κίκονες κλῖναν δαμάσαντες Ἀχαίους.

Which is as much as to say, 'The townsfolk call for help to their neighbours, the yokels, that were more numerous than they, and better men in battle . . . so when the sun turned to the time of the loosing of oxen the Town drave in the ranks of the Gown, and won the victory.' They were strong, the townsmen, but not merciful. 'The crowns of some chaplains, viz. all the skin so far as the tonsure went, these diabolical imps flayed off in scorn of their clergy,' and 'some poor innocents these confounded sons of Satan knocked down, beat, and most cruelly wounded.' The result, in the long run, was that the University received from Edward III. 'a most large charter, containing many liberties, some that they had before, and *others that he had taken away from the town.*' Thus Edward granted to the University 'the custody of the assize of bread, wine, and ale,' the supervising of measures and weights, the sole power of clearing the streets of the town and suburbs. Moreover, the Mayor and the chief Burghers were condemned yearly

MAGDALEN TOWER
FROM
CHRISTCHURCH MEADOWS.

to a sort of public penance and humiliation on St. Scholastica's Day. Thus, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the strife of Town and Gown had ended in the complete victory of the latter.

Though the University owed its success to its clerkly character, and though the Legate backed it with all the power of Rome, yet the scholars were Englishmen and Liberals first, Catholics next. Thus they had all English sympathy with them when they quarrelled with the Legate in 1238, and shot his cook (who, indeed, had thrown hot broth at them); and thus, in later days, the undergraduates were with Simon de Montfort against King Henry, and aided the barons with a useful body of archers. The University, too, constantly withstood the Friars, who had settled in Oxford on pretence of wishing to convert the Jews, and had attempted to get education into their hands. 'The Preaching Friars, who had lately obtained from the Pope divers privileges, particularly an exemption, as they pretended,

from being subject to the jurisdiction of the University, began to behave themselves very insolent against the Chancellors and Masters.' (Wood, *Annals*, i. 399.) The conduct of the Friars caused endless appeals to Rome, and in this matter, too, Oxford was stoutly national, and resisted the Pope, as it had, on occasions, defied the King. The King's Jews, too, the University kept in pretty good order, and when, in 1268, a certain Hebrew snatched the crucifix from the hand of the Chancellor and trod it under foot, his tribesmen were compelled to raise 'a fair and stately cross of marble, very curiously wrought,' on the scene of the sacrilege.

The growth in power and importance of academic corporations having now been sketched, let us try to see what the outer aspect of the town was like in these rude times, and what manner of life the undergraduates led. For this purpose we may be allowed to draw a rude, but not unfaithful, picture of a day in a student's life. No incident will be introduced for which there is

THE STONE PULPIT
AT MAGDALEN.

not authority, in Wood, or in Mr. Anstey's invaluable documents, the *Munimenta Academica*, published in the collection of the Master of the Rolls. Some latitude as to dates must be allowed, it is true, and we are not of course to suppose that any one day of life was ever so gloriously crowded as that of our undergraduate.

The time is the end of the fourteenth century. The forest and the moor stretch to the east gate of the city. Magdalen bridge is not yet built, nor of course the tower of Magdalen, which M. Brunet-Debaines has sketched from Christ Church walks. Not till about 1473 was the tower built, and years would pass after that before choristers saluted with their fresh voices from its battlements the dawn of the first of May, or sermons were preached from the beautiful stone pulpit in the open air. When our undergraduate, Walter de Stoke, or, more briefly, Stoke, was at Oxford, the spires of the city were few. Where Magdalen stands now, the old Hospital of St. John then stood

—a foundation of Henry III.—but the Jews were no longer allowed to bury their dead in the close, which is now the 'Physic Garden.' 'In 1289,' as Wood says, 'the Jews were banished from England for various enormities and crimes committed by them.' The Great and Little Jewries—those dim, populous streets behind the modern Post Office—had been sacked and gutted. No clerk would ever again risk his soul for a fair Jewess's sake, nor lose his life for his love at the hands of that eminent theologian, Fulke de Breauté. The beautiful tower of Merton was still almost fresh, and the spires of St. Mary's, of old All Saints, of St. Frideswyde, and the strong tower of New College on the city wall, were the most prominent features in a bird's-eye view of the town. But though part of Merton, certainly the chapel tower as we have seen, the odd muniment-room with the steep stone roof, and, perhaps, the Library existed; though New was built; and though Balliol and University owned some halls, on, or near,

MAGDALEN
CLOISTERS.

the site of the present colleges, Oxford was still an university of poor scholars, who lived in town's-people's dwellings.

Thus, in the great quarrel with the Legate in 1238, John Currey, of Scotland, boarded with Will Maynard, while Hugh le Verner abode in the house of Osmund the Miller, with Raynold the Irishman and seven of his fellows. John Mortimer and Rob Norensis lodged with Augustine Gosse, and Adam de Wolton lodged in Cat Street, where you can still see the curious arched doorway of Catte's, or St. Catherine's Hall. By the time of my hero, Walter Stoke, the king had not yet decreed that all scholars of years of discretion should live in the house of some sufficient principal (1421); so let him lodge at Catte Hall, at the corner of the street that leads to New College out of the modern Broad Street, which was then the City Ditch. It is six o'clock on a summer morning, and the bells waken Stoke, who is sleeping on a flock bed, in his little *camera*. His room, though he is not one of the

luxurious clerks whom the University scolds in various statutes, is pretty well furnished. His bed alone is worth not less than fifteenpence; he has a 'cofer' valued at twopence (we have plenty of those old valuations), and in his cofer are his black coat, which no one would think dear at fourpence, his tunic, cheap at tenpence, 'a roll of the seven Psalms,' and twelve books only 'at his beddes heed.' Stoke has not

> 'Twenty bookes, clothed in blak and reed,
> Of Aristotil and of his philosophie,'

like Chaucer's Undergraduate, who must have been a bibliophile. There are not many records of 'as many as twenty bookes' in the old valuations. The great ornament of the room is a neat trophy of buckler, bow, arrows, and two daggers, all hanging conveniently on the wall. Stoke opens his eyes, yawns, looks round for his clothes, and sees, with no surprise, that his laundress has not sent home his clean linen. No; Christina, of the parish of St. Martin, who

BOWLS IN
NEW COLLEGE
GARDEN.

used to be Stoke's *lotrix*, has been detected at last. 'Under pretence of washing for scholars, *multa mala perpetrata fuerunt*,' she has committed all manner of crimes, and is now in the Spinning House, *carcerata fuit*. Stoke wastes a malediction on the laundress, and, dressing as well as he may, runs down to Parson's Pleasure, I hope, and has a swim, for I find no tub in his room, or, indeed, in the *camera* of any other scholar. It is now time to go, not to chapel—for Catte's has no chapel—but to parish Church, and Stoke goes very devoutly to St. Peter's, where we shall find him again, later in the day, in another mood. About eight o'clock he 'commonises' with a Paris man, Henricus de Bourges, who has an admirable mode of cooking omelettes, which makes his company much sought after at breakfast-time. The University, in old times, was full of French students, as Paris was thronged by Englishmen. Lectures begin at nine, and first there is lecture in the hall by the principal of Catte's. That scholar receives

his pupils in a bare room, where it is very doubtful whether the students are allowed to sit down. From the curious old seal of the University of St. Andrews, however, it appears that the luxury of forms was permitted, in Scotland, to all but the servitors, who held the lecturer's candles. The principal of Catte's is in academic dress, and wears a black cape, boots, and a hood. The undergraduates have no distinguishing costume. After an hour or two of *vivâ voce* exercises in the grammar of Priscian, preparatory lecture is over, and a reading man will hurry off to the 'schools,' a set of low-roofed buildings between St. Mary's and Brasenose. There he will find the Divinity 'school' or lecture-room in the place of honour, with Medicine on one hand and Law on the other; the lecture-rooms for grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy, for metaphysics, ethics, and 'the tongues,' stretching down School Street on either side. Here the Prælectors are holding forth, and all newly-

HIGH
STREET

made Masters of Arts are bound to teach their subject *regere scholas*, whether they like it or not. Our friend, Master Stoke, however, is on pleasure bent, and means to pay his fine of twopence for omitting lecture, and go off to the festival of his *nation* (he is of the Southern nation, and hates Scotch, Welsh, and Irish) in the parish Church. He stops in the Flower Market and at a barber's shop on his way to St. Peter's, and comes forth a wonderful pagan figure with a Bacchic mask covering his honest countenance, with horns protruding through a wig of tow, with vine-leaves twisted in and out of the horns, and roses stuck wherever there is room for roses. Henricus de Bourges, and half-a-dozen Picardy men, with some merry souls from the Southern side of the Thames, are jigging down the High, playing bag-pipes and guitars. To these Stoke joins himself, and they waltz joyously into the church, and in and out of the gateways of the different halls, singing,—

'Mihi est propositum in taberna mori,
Vinum sit appositum morientis ori,
Ut dicant, quum venerint, angelorum chori
Deus sit propitius huic potatori.'

The students of the Northern nations mock, of course, at these revellers, thumbs are bitten, threats exchanged, and we shall see what comes of the quarrel. But the hall bells chime half-past noon; it is dinner-time in Oxford, and Stoke, as he throws off his mask (*larva*) and vine-leaves, mutters to himself the equivalent for 'there *will* be a row about this.' There will, indeed, for the penalty is not 'crossing at the buttery,' nor 'gating,' but — excommunication! (*Munim. Academ.*, i. 18.) Dinner is not a very quiet affair, for the Catte's men have had to fight for their beer in the public streets with some Canterbury College fellows who were set on by their Warden, of all people, to commit this violence (*ut vi et violentia raperent cerevisiam aliorum scholarum in vico*); however, Catte's has had the best of it, and there is beer in plenty. It is possible, how-

ever, that fish is scarce, for certain 'forestallers' (*regratarii*) have been buying up salmon and soles, and refusing to sell them at less than double the proper price. On the whole, however, there was a rude abundance of meat and bread; indeed, Stoke may have fared better in Catte's than the modern undergraduate does in the hall of the College protected by St. Catherine. After dinner there would be lecture in Lent, but we are not in Lent. A young man's fancy lightly turns to the Beaumont, north of the modern Beaumont Street, where there are wide playing-fields, and space for archery, foot-ball, stool-ball, and other sports. Stoke rushes out of hall, and runs up-stairs into the *camera* of Roger de Freshfield, a reading man, but a good fellow. He knocks and enters, and finds Freshfield over his favourite work, The *Posterior Analytics*, and a pottle of strawberries. 'Come down to the Beaumont, old man,' he says, 'and play pyked staffe.' Roger is disinclined to move, he *must* finish the *Posterior Analy-*

tics. Stoke lounges about, in the eternal fashion of undergraduates after luncheon, and picking up the *Philobiblon* of Richard de Bury (then quite a new book), clinches his argument in favour of pyke and staffe with a quotation: 'You will perhaps see a stiff-necked youth lounging sluggishly in his study. . . . He is not ashamed to eat fruit and cheese over an open book, and to transfer his cup from side to side upon it.' Thus addressed, Roger lays aside his *Analytics*, and the pair walk down by Balliol, to the Beaumont, where pyked staffe, or sword and buckler, is played. At the Beaumont they find two men who say that 'sword and buckler can be played sofft and ffayre,' that is, without hard hitting, and with one of these Stoke begins to fence. Alas! a dispute arose about a stroke, the by-standers interfered, and Stoke's opponent drew his hanger (*extraxit cultellum vocatum hangere*), and hit one John Felerd over the sconce. On this the Proctors come up, and the assailant is put in Bocardo, while Stoke

IN
CORNMARKET
STREET.

goes off to a 'pass-supper' given by an *inceptor*, who has just taken his degree. These suppers were not voluntary entertainments, but enforced by law. At supper the talk ranges over University gossip, they tell of the scholar who lately tried to raise the devil in Grope Lane, and was pleased by the gentlemanly manner of the foul fiend. They speak of the Queen's man, who has just been plucked for maintaining that *Ego currit*, or *ego est currens*, is as good Latin as *ego curro*. Then the party breaks up, and Stoke goes towards Merton, with some undergraduates of that College, Bridlington, Alderberk, and Lymby. At the corner of Grope Lane, out come many men of the Northern nations, armed with shields, and bows and arrows. Stoke and his friends run into Merton for weapons, and 'standing in a window of that hall, shot divers arrows, and one that Bridlington shot hit Henry de l'Isle, and David Kirkby unmercifully perished, for after John de Benton had given him a dangerous wound in the head

with his faulchion, came Will de la Hyde and wounded him in the knee with his sword.'

These were rough times, and it is not improbable that Stoke had a brush with the Town before he got safely back to Catte's Hall. The old rudeness gave way gradually, as the Colleges swallowed up the irregular halls, and as the scholars unattached, *infando nomine Chamber-Dekyns*, ceased to exist. Learning, however, dwindled, as Colleges increased, under the clerical and reactionary rule of the House of Lancaster.

III

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

III

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

We have now arrived at a period in the history of Oxford which is confused and unhappy, but for us full of interest, and perhaps of instruction. The hundred years that passed by between the age of Chaucer and the age of Erasmus were, in Southern Europe, years of the most eager life. We hear very often—too often, perhaps—of what is called the Renaissance. The energy of delight with which Italy welcomed the new birth of art, of literature, of human freedom, has been made familiar to every reader. It is not with Italy, but with England and with Oxford, that we are concerned. How did the University and the Colleges prosper in that strenuous time

when the world ran after loveliness of form and colour, as, in other ages, it has run after warlike renown, or the far-off rewards of the saintly life? What was Oxford doing when Florence, Venice, and Rome were striving towards no meaner goal than perfection?

It must be said that 'the spring came slowly up this way.' The University merely reflected the very practical character of the people. In contemplating the events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in their influence on English civilisation, we are reminded once more of the futility of certain modern aspirations. No amount of University Commissions, nor of well-meant reforms, will change the nature of Englishmen. It is impossible, by distributions of University prizes and professorships, to attract into the career of letters that proportion of industry and ingenuity which, in Germany for example, is devoted to the scholastic life. Politics, trade, law, sport, religion, will claim their own in England,

CASTLE
STREET.

just as they did at the Revival of Letters. The illustrious century which Italy employed in unburying, appropriating, and enjoying the treasures of Greek literature and art, our fathers gave, in England, to dynastic and constitutional squabbles, and to religious broils. The Renaissance in England, and chiefly in Oxford, was like a bitter and changeful spring. There was an hour of genial warmth, there breathed a wind from the south, in the lifetime of Chaucer; then came frosts and storms; again the brief sunshine of court favour shone on literature for a while, when Henry VIII. encouraged study, and Wolsey and Fox founded Christ Church and Corpus Christi College, once more the bad days of religious strife returned, and the promise of learning was destroyed. Thus the chief result of the awakening thought of the fourteenth century in England was not a lively delight in literature, but the appearance of the Lollards. The intensely practical genius of our race turned not to letters, but to questions about

the soul and its future, about property and its distribution. The Lollards were put down in Oxford; 'the tares were weeded out' by the House of Lancaster, and in the process the germs of free thought, of originality, and of a rational education, were destroyed. 'Wyclevism did domineer among us,' says Wood; and, in fact, the intellect of the University was absorbed, like the intellect of France during the heat of the Jansenist controversy, in defending or assailing '267 damned conclusions,' drawn from the books of Wyclife. The University 'lost many of her children through the profession of Wyclevism.' Those who remained were often 'beneficed clerks.' The Friars lifted up their heads again, and Oxford was becoming a large ecclesiastical school. As the University declared to Archbishop Chichele (1438), 'Our noble mother, that was blessed in so goodly an offspring, is all but utterly destroyed and desolate.' Presently the foreign wars and the wars of the Roses drained the University of

the youth of England. The country was overrun with hostile forces, or infested by disbanded soldiers. Plague and war, war and plague, and confusion, alternate in the annals. Sickly as Oxford is to-day by climate and situation, she is a city of health compared to what she was in the middle ages. In 1448 'a pestilence broke out, occasioned by the overflowing of waters, ... also by the lying of many scholars in one room or dormitory in almost every Hall, which occasioned nasty air and smells, and consequently diseases.' In the general dulness and squalor two things were remarkable: one, the last splendour of the feudal time; the other, the first dawn of the new learning from Italy. In 1452, George Neville of Balliol, brother of the King-maker, gave the most prodigious pass-supper that was ever served in Oxford. On the first day there were 600 messes of meat, divided into three courses. The second course is worthy of the attention of the epicure:—

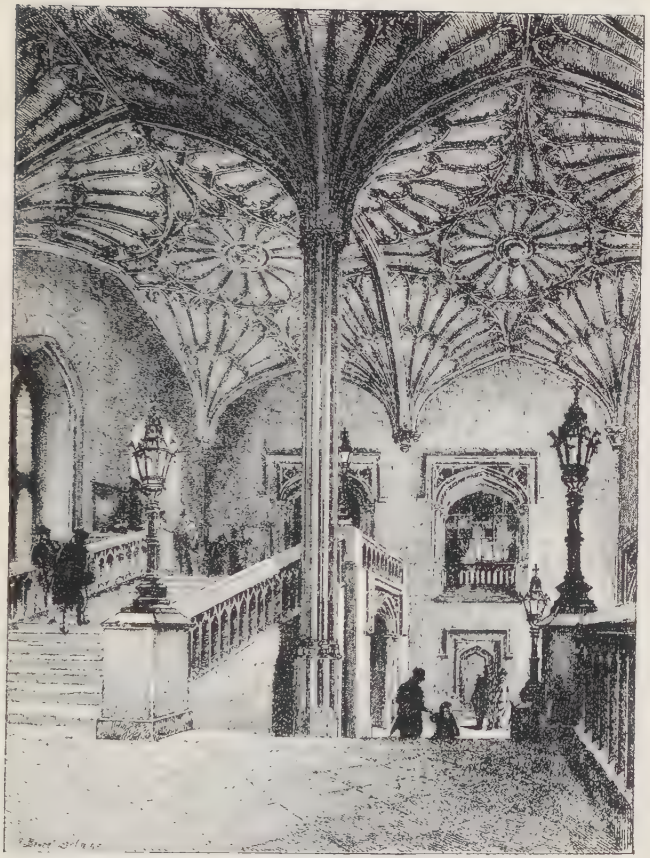
SECOND COURSE

Vian in brase.	Carcell.
Crane in sawce.	Partrych.
Young Pocock.	Venson baked.
Coney.	Fryed meat in paste.
Pigeons.	Lesh Lumbert.
Byttor.	A Frutor.
Curlew.	A Sutteltee.

Against this prodigious gormandising we must set that noble gift, the Library presented to Oxford by Duke Humfrey of Gloucester. In the Catalogue, drawn up in 1439, we mark many books of the utmost value to the impoverished students. Here are the works of Plato, and the *Ethics* and *Politics* of Aristotle, translated by Leonard the Arctine. Here, among the numerous writings of the Fathers, are Tully and Seneca, Averroes and Avicenna, *Bellum Trojae cum secretis secretorum*, Apuleius, Aulus Gellius, Livy, Boccaccio, Petrarch. Here, with Ovid's verses, is the Commentary on Dante, and his *Divine Comedy*. Here, rarest of all, is a Greek Dictionary, the silent father of Liddel's and Scott's to be.

The most hopeful fact in the University annals, after the gift of those manuscripts (to which the very beauty of their illuminations proved ruinous in Puritan times), was the establishment of a printing-press at Oxford, and the arrival of certain Italians, 'to propagate and settle the studies of true and genuine humanity among us.' The exact date of the introduction of printing let us leave to be determined by the learned writer who is now at work on the history of Oxford. The advent of the Italians is dated by Wood in 1488. Polydore Virgil had lectured in New College. 'He first of all taught literature in Oxford. Cyprianus and Nicholaus, *Italici*, also arrived and dined with the Vice-President of Magdalen on Christmas Day. Lily and Colet, too, one of them the founder, the other the first Head Master, of St. Paul's School, were about this time studying in Italy, under the great Politian and Hermolaus Barbarus. Oxford, which had so long been in hostile communication with Italy as represented by the Papal Courts, at

last touched, and was thrilled by the electric current of Italian civilisation. At this conjuncture of affairs, who but is reminded of the youth and the education of Gargantua? Till the very end of the fifteenth century Oxford had been that 'huge barbarian pupil,' and had revelled in vast Rabelaisian suppers: 'of fat beeves he had killed three hundred sixty seven thousand and fourteen, that in the entering in of spring he might have plenty of powdered beef.' The bill of fare of George Neville's feast is like one of the catalogues dear to the Curé of Meudon. For Oxford, as for Gargantua, 'they appointed a great sophister-doctor, that read him Donatus, Theodoletus, and Alanus, in *parabolis*.' Oxford spent far more than Gargantua's eighteen years and eleven months over 'the book de Modis significandis, with the commentaries of Berlinguandus and a rabble of others.' Now, under Colet, and Erasmus (1497), Oxford was put, like Gargantua, under new masters, and learned that the old scholarship 'had been but brutishness, and



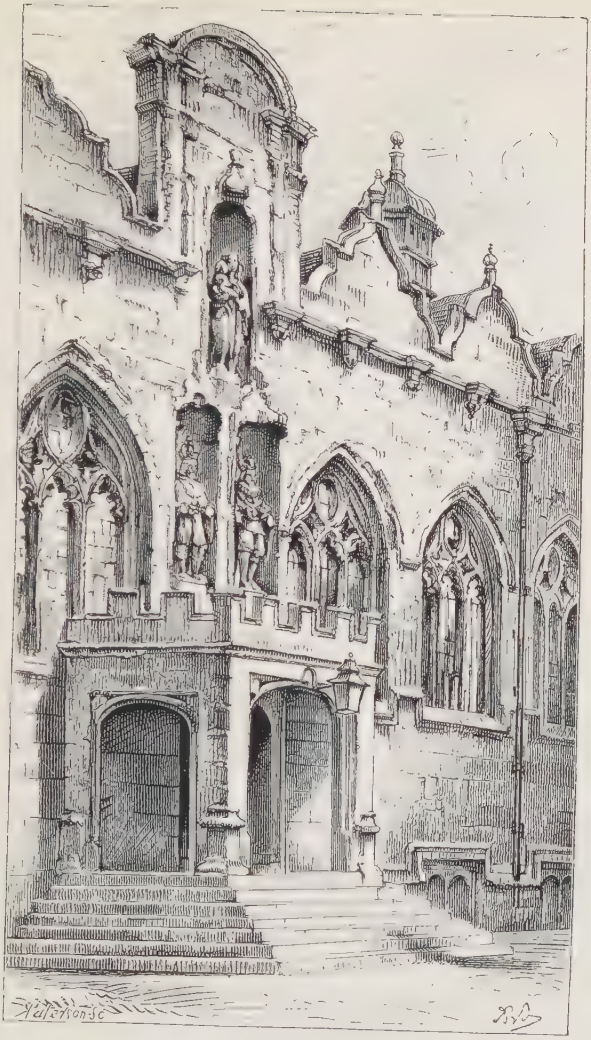
STAIRCASE
TO THE HALL,
CHRISTCHURCH.

the old wisdom but blunt, foppish toys serving only to bastardise noble spirits, and to corrupt all the flower of youth.'

The prospects of classical learning at Oxford (and, whatever may be the case to-day, on classical learning depended, in the fifteenth century, the fortunes of European literature) now seemed fair enough. People from the very source of knowledge were lecturing in Oxford. Wolsey was Bursar of Magdalen. The Colleges, to which B. N. C. was added in 1509, and C. C. C. in 1516, were competing with each other for success in the New Learning. Fox, the founder of C. C. C., established in his college two chairs of Greek and Latin, 'to extirpate barbarism.' Meanwhile, Cambridge had to hire an Italian to write public speeches at twenty pence each! Henry VIII. in his youth was, like Francis I., the patron of literature, as literature was understood in Italy. He saw in learning a new splendour to adorn his court, a new source of intellectual luxury, though even Henry had an eye on the theo-

logical aspect of letters. Between 1500 and 1530 Oxford was noisy with the clink of masons' hammers and chisels. Brasenose, Corpus, and the magnificent kitchen of Christ Church, were being erected. (The beautiful staircase, which M. Brunet-Debaines has sketched was not finished till 1640. The world owes it to Dr. Fell. The Oriel niches, designed in the illustration, are of rather later date.) The streets were crowded with carts, dragging in from all the neighbouring quarries stones for the future homes of the fair humanities. Erasmus found in Oxford a kind of substitute for the Platonic Society of Florence. 'He would hardly care much about going to Italy at all, except for the sake of having been there. . . . When I listen to Colet, it seems to me like listening to Plato himself'; and he praises the judgment and learning of those Englishmen, Grocyn and Linacre, who had been taught in Italy.

In spite of all this promise, the Renaissance in England was rotten at the root. Theology killed it, or, at the least, breathed on it



NICHES
AT
ORIEL.

a deadly blight. Our academic forefathers 'drove at practice,' and saw everything with the eyes of party men, and of men who recognised no interest save that of religion. It is Mr. Seebohm (*Oxford Reformers*, 1867), I think, who detects, in Colet's concern with the religious side of literature, the influence of Savonarola. When in Italy 'he gave himself entirely to the study of the Holy Scriptures.' He brought to England from Italy, not the early spirit of Pico of Mirandola, the delightful freedom of his youth, but his later austerity, his later concern with the harmony of scripture and philosophy. The book which the dying Petrarch held wistfully in his hands, revering its very material shape, though he could not spell its contents, was the *Iliad* of Homer. The book which the young Renaissance held in its hands in England, with reverence and eagerness as strong and tender, contained the Epistles of St. Paul. It was on the Epistles that Colet lectured in 1496-97, when doctors and abbots flocked to hear him, with

their note-books in their hands. Thus Oxford differed from Florence, England from Italy: the former all intent on what it believed to be the very Truth, the latter all absorbed on what it knew to be no other than Beauty herself.

We cannot afford to regret the choice that England and Oxford made. The search for Truth was as certain to bring 'not peace but a sword,' as the search for Beauty was to bring the decadence of Italy, the corruption of manners, the slavery of two hundred years. Still, our practical earnestness did rob Oxford of the better side of the Renaissance. It is not possible here to tell the story of religious and social changes, which followed so hard upon each other, in the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. A few moments in these stormy years are still memorable for some terrible or ludicrous event.

That Oxford was rather 'Trojan' than 'Greek,' that men were more concerned about their dinners and their souls, than

their prosody and philosophy, in 1531, is proved by the success of Grynaeus. He visited the University and carried off quantities of MSS., chiefly Neoplatonic, on which no man set any value. Yet, in 1535, Layton, a Commissioner, wrote to Cromwell, that he and his companions had established the New Learning in the University. A Lecture in Greek was founded in Magdalen, two chairs of Greek and Latin in New, two in All Souls, and two already existed, as we have seen, in C. C. C. This Layton is he that took a Rabelaisian and unquotable revenge on that old tyrant of the Schools, Duns Scotus. 'We have set Dunce in Bocardo, and utterly banished him Oxford for ever, with all his blind glosses. . . . And the second time we came to New College we found all the great quadrant full of the leaves of Dunce, the wind blowing them into every corner. And there we found a certain Mr. Greenfield, a gentleman of Buckinghamshire, gathering up part of the same books' leaves, as he

said, therewith to make him *sewers* or *blanshers*, to keep the deer within his wood, thereby to have the better cry with his hounds.' Ah! if the University Commissioners would only set Aristotle, and Messrs. Ritter and Preller, 'in Bocardo,' many a young gentleman out of Buckinghamshire and other counties would joyously help in the good work, and use the pages, if not for *blanshers*, for other sportive purposes!

'*Habent sua fata libelli*,' as Terentianus Maurus says, in a frequently-quoted verse. If Cromwell's Commissioners were hard on Duns, the Visitors of Edward VI. were ruthless in their condemnation of everything that smacked of Popery or of magic. Evangelical religion in England has never been very favourable to learning. Thus, in 1550, 'the ancient libraries were by their appointment rifled. Many manuscripts, guilty of no other superstition than red letters in the front or titles, were condemned to the fire. . . . Such books wherein appeared angles

IN
THE
BODLEIAN.

were thought sufficient to be destroyed, because accounted Papish or diabolical, or both.' A cart-load of MSS., lucubrations of the Fellows of Merton, chiefly in controversial divinity, was taken away; but, by the good services of one Herks, a Dutchman, many books were preserved, and, later, entered the Bodleian Library. The world can spare the controversial manuscripts of the Fellows of Merton, but who knows what invaluable scrolls may have perished in the Puritan bonfire! Persons, the librarian of Balliol, sold old books to buy Protestant ones. Two noble libraries were sold for forty shillings, for waste paper. Thus the reign of Edward VI. gave free play to that ascetic and intolerable hatred of letters which had now and again made its voice heard under Henry VIII. Oxford was almost empty. The schools were used by laundresses, as a place wherein clothes might conveniently be dried. The citizens encroached on academic property. Some schools were quite destroyed, and the sites

converted into gardens. Few men took degrees. The college plate and the jewels left by pious benefactors were stolen, and went to the melting-pot. Thus flourished Oxford under Edward VI.

The reign of Mary was scarcely more favourable to letters. No one knew what to be at in religion. In Magdalen no one could be found to say Mass, the fellows were turned out, the undergraduates were whipped—boyish martyrs—and crossed at the buttery. What most pleases, in this tragic reign, is the anecdote of Edward Anne of Corpus. Anne, with the conceit of youth, had written a Latin satire on the Mass. He was therefore sentenced to be publicly flogged in the hall of his college, and to receive one lash for each line in his satire. Never, surely, was a poet so sharply taught the merit of brevity. How Edward Anne must have regretted that he had not knocked off an epigram, a biting couplet, or a smart quatrain with the sting of the wit in the tail!

Oxford still retains a memory of the

NEW
COLLEGE.

hideous crime of this reign. In Broad Street, under the windows of Balliol, there is a small stone cross in the pavement. This marks the place where, some years ago, a great heap of wooden ashes was found. These ashes were the remains of the fire of October 16th, 1555—the day when Ridley and Latimer were burned. 'They were brought,' says Wood, 'to a place over against Balliol College, where now stands a row of poor cottages, a little before which, under the town wall, ran so clear a stream that it gave the name of Canditch, *candida fossa*, to the way leading by it.' To recover the memory of that event, let the reader fancy himself on the top of the tower of St. Michael's, that is, immediately above the city wall. No houses interfere between him and the open country, in which Balliol stands; not with its present frontage, but much further back. A clear stream runs through the place where is now Broad Street, and the road above is dark with a swaying crowd, out of which rises the vapour of

smoke from the martyrs' pile. At your feet, on the top of Bocardo prison (which spanned the street at the North Gate), Cranmer stands manacled, watching the fiery death which is soon to purge away the memory of his own faults and crimes. He, too, joined that 'noble army of martyrs' who fought all, though they knew it not, for one cause—the freedom of the human spirit.

It was in a night-battle that they fell, and 'confused was the cry of the pæan,' but they won the victory, and we have entered into the land for which they contended. When we think of these martyrdoms, can we wonder that the Fellows of Lincoln did not spare to ring a merry peal on their gaudy-day, the day of St. Hugh, even though Mary the Queen had just left her bitter and weary life?

It would be pleasant to have to say that learning returned to Oxford on the rising of 'that bright Occidental star, Queen Elizabeth.' On the other hand, the University recovered slowly, after being 'much troubled,'

as Wood says, '*and hurried up and down* by the changes of religion.' We get a glimpse, from Wood, of the Fellows of Merton singing the psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins round a fire in the College Hall. We see the sub-warden snatching the book out of the hands of a junior fellow, and declaring 'that he would never dance after that pipe.' We find Oxford so illiterate, that she could not even provide an University preacher! A country gentleman, Richard Taverner of Woodeaton, would stroll into St. Mary's, with his sword and damask gown, and give the Academicians, destitute of academical advice, a sermon beginning with these words,—

'Arriving at the mount of St. Mary's, I have brought you some fine bisketts baked in the Oven of Charitie, carefully conserved for the chickens of the Church, the sparrows of the spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation.'

In spite of these evil symptoms, a Greek oration and plenty of Latin plays were ready for Queen Elizabeth when she visited Oxford in 1566. The religious refugees, who had

'eaten mice at Zurich' in Mary's time, had returned, and their influence was hostile to learning. A man who had lived on mice for his faith was above Greek. The court which contained Sydney, and which welcomed Bruno, was strong enough to make the classics popular. That famed Polish Count, Alasco, was 'received with Latin orations and disputes (1583) in the best manner,' and only a scoffing Italian, like Bruno, ventured to call the Heads of Houses, *the Drowsy heads —dormitantes.* Bruno was a man whom nothing could teach to speak well of people in authority. Oxford enjoyed the religious peace (not extended to 'Seminarists') of Elizabeth's and James's reigns, and did not foresee that she was about to become the home of the Court and a place of arms.

IV

JACOBEAN OXFORD

IV

JACOBEAN OXFORD

The gardens of Wadham College on a bright morning in early spring are a scene in which the memory of old Oxford pleasantly lingers, and is easily revived. The great cedars throw their secular shadow on the ancient turf, the chapel forms a beautiful background; the whole place is exactly what it was two hundred and sixty years ago. The stones of Oxford walls, when they do not turn black and drop off in flakes, assume tender tints of the palest gold, red, and orange. Along a wall, which looks so old that it may well have formed a defence of the ancient Augustinian priory, the stars of the yellow jasmine flower abundantly. The industrious hosts of the bees have left their cells, to labour in this first morning of spring;

the doves coo, the thrushes are noisy in the trees. All breathes of the year's renewal, and of the coming April ; and all that gladdens us may have gladdened some indolent scholar in the time of King James.

In the reign of the first Stuart king of England, Oxford became the town that we know. Even in Elizabeth's days, could we ascend the stream of centuries, we should find ourselves much at home in Oxford. The earliest trustworthy map, that of Agas (1578), is worth studying, if we wish to understand the Oxford that Elizabeth left, and that the architects of James embellished, giving us the most interesting examples of collegiate buildings, which are both stately and comfortable. Let us enter Oxford by the Iffley Road, in the year 1578. We behold, as Agas enthusiastically writes,—

> 'A citie seated, rich in everything,
> Girt with wood and water, meadow, corn, and hill.'

The way is not bordered, of course, by the long, straggling streets of rickety cottages,

IFFLEY.

which now stretch from the bridge half way to Cowley and Iffley. The church, called by ribalds 'the boiled rabbit,' from its peculiar shape, lies on the right; there is a gate in the city wall, on the place where the road now turns to Holywell. At this time the walls still existed, and ran from Magdalen past 'St. Mary's College, called Newe,' through Exeter, through the site of Mr. Parker's shop, and all along the south side of Broad Street to St. Michael's, and Bocardo Gate. There the wall cut across to the castle. On the southern side of the city, it skirted Corpus and Merton Gardens, and was interrupted by Christ Church. Probably if it were possible for us to visit Elizabethan Oxford, the walls and the five castle towers would seem the most curious features in the place. Entering the East Gate, Magdalen and Magdalen Grammar School would be familiar objects. St. Edmund's Hall would be in its present place, and Queen's would present its ancient Gothic front. It is easy to imagine the change in the High

Street which would be produced by a Queen's not unlike Oriel, in the room of the highly classical edifice of Wren. All Souls would be less remarkable; at St. Mary's we should note the absence of the 'scandalous image' of Our Lady over the door. At Merton the fellows' quadrangle did not yet exist, and a great wood-yard bordered on Corpus. In front of Oriel was an open space with trees, and there were a few scattered buildings, such as Peckwater's Inn (on the site of 'Peck'), and Canterbury College. Tom Quad was stately but incomplete. Turning from St. Mary's past B. N. C., we miss the attics in Brasenose front, we miss the imposing Radcliffe, we miss all the quadrangle of the schools, except the Divinity school, and we miss the Theatre. If we go down South Street, past Ch. Ch. we find an open space where Pembroke stands. Where Wadham is now, the most uniform, complete, and unchanged of all the colleges, there are only the open pleasances, and perhaps a few ruins of the Augustinian priory. St. John's lacks

OXFORD SPIRES
FROM IFFLEY.

its inner quadrangle, and Balliol, in place of its new buildings, has its old delightful grove. As to the houses of the town, they are not unlike the tottering and picturesque old roofs and gables of King Street.

To the Oxford of Elizabeth's reign, then, the founders and architects of her successor added, chiefly, the Schools' quadrangle, with the great gate of the five orders, a building beautiful, as it were, in its own despite. They added a smaller curiosity of the same sort, at Merton; they added Wadham, perhaps their most successful achievement. Their taste was a medley of new and old, they made a not uninteresting effort to combine the exquisiteness of Gothic decoration with the proportions of Greek architecture. The tower of the five orders reminds the spectator, in a manner, of the style of Milton. It is rich and overloaded, yet its natural beauty is not abated by the relics out of the great treasures of Greece and Rome, which are built into the mass. The Ionic and Corinthian pillars are like the

Latinisms of Milton, the double-gilding which once covered the figures and emblems of the upper part of the tower gave them the splendour of Miltonic ornament. 'When King James came from Woodstock to see this quadrangular pile, he commanded the gilt figures to be whitened over,' because they were so dazzling, or, as Wood expresses it, 'so glorious and splendid that none, especially when the sun shone, could behold them.' How characteristic of James is this anecdote! He was by no means *le roi-soleil*, as courtiers called Louis XIV., as divines called the pedantic Stuart. It is easy to fancy the King, issuing from the Library of Bodley, where he has been turning over books of theology, prosing, and displaying his learning for hours. The rheumy, blinking eyes are dazzled in the sunlight, and he peevishly commands the gold work to be 'whitened over.' Certainly the translators of the Bible were but ill-advised when they compared his Majesty to the rising sun in all his glory.

THE GATEWAY
OF
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE.

James was rather fond of visiting Oxford and the royal residence at Woodstock. We shall see that his Court, the most dissolute, perhaps, that England ever tolerated, corrupted the manners of the students. On one of his Majesty's earliest visits he had a chance of displaying the penetration of which he was so proud. James was always finding out something or somebody, till it almost seemed as if people had discovered that the best way to flatter him was to try to deceive him. In 1604, there was in Oxford a certain Richard Haydock, a Bachelor of Physic. This Haydock practised his profession during the day like other mortals, but varied from the kindly race of men by a pestilent habit of preaching all night. It was Haydock's contention that he preached unconsciously in his sleep, when he would give out a text with the greatest gravity, and declare such sacred matters as were revealed to him in slumber, 'his preaching coming by revelation.' Though people went to hear Haydock, they

were chiefly influenced by curiosity. 'His auditory were willing to silence him by pulling, haling, and pinching him, yet would he pertinaciously persist to the end, and sleep still.' The King was introduced into Haydock's bedroom, heard him declaim, and next day cross-examined him in private. Awed by the royal acuteness, Haydock confessed that he was a humbug, and that he had taken to preaching all night by way of getting a little notoriety, and because he felt himself to be 'a buried man in the University.'

That a man should hope to get reputation by preaching all night is itself a proof that the University, under James, was too theologically minded. When has it been otherwise? The religious strife of the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Mary, was not asleep; the troubles of Charles's time were beginning to stir. Oxford was as usual an epitome of English opinion. We see the struggle of the wildest Puritanism, of Arminianism, of Pelagianism, of a dozen

'isms,' which are dead enough, but have left their pestilent progeny to disturb a place of religion, learning, and amusement. By whatever names the different sects were called, men's ideas and tendencies were divided into two easily recognisable classes. Calvinism and Puritanism on one side, with the Puritanic haters of letters and art, were opposed to Catholicism in germ, to literature, and mundane studies. How difficult it is to take a side in this battle, where both parties had one foot on firm ground, the other in chaos, where freedom, or what was to become freedom of thought, was allied with narrow bigotry, where learning was chained to superstition!

As early as 1606, Mr. William Laud, B.D., of St. John's College, began to disturb the University. The young man preached a sermon which was thought to look Romewards. Laud became *suspect*, it was thought a 'scandalous' thing to give him the usual courteous greetings in the street or in the college quadrangle. From this time the

history of Oxford, for forty years, is mixed up with the history of Laud. The divisions of Roundhead and of Cavalier have begun. The majority of the undergraduates are on the side of Laud; and the Court, the citizens, and many of the elder members of the University, are with the Puritans.

The Court and the King, we have said, were fond of being entertained in the College halls. James went from libraries to academic disputations, thence to dinner, and from dinner to look on at comedies played by the students. The Cambridge men did not care to see so much royal favour bestowed on Oxford. When James visited the University in 1641, a Cambridge wit produced a remarkable epigram. For some mysterious reason the playful fancies of the sister University have never been greatly admired at Oxford, where the brisk air, men flatter themselves, breeds nimbler humours. Here is part of the Cantab's epigram:—

THE GARDEN FRONT
OF ST. JOHN'S.

'To Oxenford the King has gone,
With all his mighty peers,
That hath in peace maintained us,
These five or six long years.'

The poem maunders on for half-a-dozen lines, and 'loses itself in the sands,' like the River Rhine, without coming to any particular point or conclusion. How much more lively is the Oxford couplet on the King, who, being bored by some amateur theatricals, twice or thrice made as if he would leave the hall, where men failed dismally to entertain him.

'"The King himself did offer,"—"What, I pray?"
"He offered twice or thrice—to go away!"'

As a result of the example of the Court, the students began to wear love-locks. In Elizabeth's time, when men wore their hair 'no longer than their ears,' long locks had been a mark, says Wood, of 'swaggerers.' Drinking and gambling were now very fashionable, undergraduates were whipped for wearing boots, while 'Puritans were many and troublesome,' and Laud publicly

declared (1614) that 'Presbyterians were as bad as Papists.' Did Laud, after all, think Papists so very bad? In 1617 he was President of his college, St. John's, on which he set his mark. It is to Laud and to Inigo Jones that Oxford owes the beautiful garden-front, perhaps the most lovely thing in Oxford. From the gardens—where for so many summers the beauty of England has rested in the shadow of the chestnut-trees, amid the music of the chimes, and in air heavy with the scent of the acacia flowers—from the gardens, Laud's building looks rather like a country-house than a college.

If St. John's men have lived in the University too much as if it were a large country-house, if they have imitated rather the Toryism than the learning of their great Archbishop, the blame is partly Laud's. How much harm to study he and Waynflete have unwittingly done, and how much they have added to the romance of Oxford! It is easy to understand that men find it a

A SUMMER AFTERNOON
ON THE
CHERWELL.

weary task to read in sight of the beauty of the groves of Magdalen and of St. John. When Kubla Khan 'a stately pleasure-dome decreed,' he did not mean to settle students there, and to ask them for metaphysical essays, and for Greek and Latin prose compositions. Kubla Khan would have found a palace to his desire in the gardens of Laud, or where Cherwell, 'meandering with a mazy motion,' stirs the green weeds, and flashes from the mill-wheel, and flows to the Isis through meadows white and purple with fritillaries.

'And here are gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossoms many an incense-bearing tree';

but here is scarcely the proper training-ground of first-class men!

Oxford returned to her ancient uses in 1625. Soon after the accession of Charles I. the plague broke out in London, and Oxford entertained the Parliament, as six hundred years before she had received the Witan. There seemed something ominous

in all that Charles did in his earlier years —the air, or men's minds, was full of the presage of fate. It was observed that the House of Commons met in the Divinity School, and that the place seemed to have infected them with theological passion. After 1625 there was never a Parliament but had its committee to discuss religion, and to stray into the devious places of divinity. The plague pursued Charles to Oxford. In those days, and long afterwards, it was a common complaint that the citizens built rows of poor cottages within the walls, and that these cottages were crowded by dirty and indigent people. Plague was bred almost yearly at Oxford, and Charles really seems to have improved the sanitary arrangements of the city.

Laud, the president of St. John's, became, by some intrigue, Chancellor of the University. He made Oxford many presents of Greek, Chinese, Hebrew, Latin, and Arabic MSS. There may have been—let us hope there were—quiet bookworms who enjoyed

ST. JOHN'S
COLLEGE.

these gifts, while the town and University were bubbling over with religious feuds. People grumbled that 'Popish darts were whet afresh on a Dutch grindstone.' A series of anti-Romish and anti-Royal sermons and pamphlets, followed as a rule by a series of recantations, kept men's minds in a ferment. The good that Laud did by his gifts—and he was a munificent patron of learning—he destroyed by his dogmatism. Scholars could not decipher Greek texts while they were torturing biblical ones into arguments for and against the opinions of the Chancellor. What is the true story about the gorgeous vestments which were found in a box in the house of the President of St. John's, and which are now preserved in the library of that College? Did they belong to the last of the old Catholic presidents of what was Chichele's College of St. Bernard before the Reformation? Were they, on the other hand, the property of Laud himself? It has been said that Laud would not have known how to

wear them. Fancy sees him treasuring that bright ecclesiastical raiment, πεπλοι παμποίκιλοι, in some place of security. At night, perhaps, when candles were lit and curtains drawn, and he was alone, he may have arrayed himself in the gorgeous chasuble before the mirror, as Hetty wore her surreptitious finery. 'There is a great deal of human nature in man.' If Laud really strutted in solitude, draped rather at random in these vestments, the ecclesiastical gear is even more interesting than the thin ivory-headed staff which supported him on his way to the scaffold; more curious than the diary in which he recorded the events of night and day, of dreaming hours and waking. In the library at St. John's they show his bust—a tarnished, gilded work of art. He has a neat little cocked-up moustache, not like a prelate's; the face is that of a Bismarck without strength of character.

In speaking of Oxford before the civil war, let us not forget that true students and peaceable men found a welcome retreat be-

yond the din of theological factions. Lord Falkland's house was within ten miles of the town. 'In this time,' says Clarendon, in his immortal panegyric, 'in this time he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polished men of the University, who found such an immenseness of wit and such a solidity of judgment in him, so infinite a fancy, bound in by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge that he was not ignorant in anything, yet such an excessive humility as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted and dwelt with him, as in a college situated in a purer air; so that his house was a university in a less volume, whither they came not so much for repose as study; and to examine and refine those grosser propositions, which laziness and consent made current in vulgar conversation.'

The signs of the times grew darker. In 1636 the King and Queen visited Oxford, 'with no applause.' In 1640 Laud sent the University his last present of manuscripts.

He was charged with many offences. He had repaired crucifixes; he had allowed the 'scandalous image' to be set up in the porch of St. Mary's; and Alderman Nixon, the Puritan grocer, had seen a man bowing to the scandalous image—so he declared. In 1642 Charles asked for money from the Colleges, for the prosecution of the war with the Parliament. The beautiful old College plate began its journey to the melting-pot. On August 9th the scholars armed themselves. There were two bands of musqueteers, one of pikemen, one of halberdiers. In the reign of Henry III. the men had been on the other side. Magdalen bridge was blocked up with heaps of wood. Stones, for the primitive warfare of the time, were transported to the top of Magdalen tower. The stones were never thrown at any foemen. Royalists and Roundheads in turn occupied the place; and while grocer Nixon fled before the Cavaliers, he came back and interceded for All Souls' College (which dealt with him for figs and sugar) when the Puritans wished

PORCH OF
ST. MARY'S.

to batter the graven images on the gate. On October 29th the King came, after Edgehill fight, the Court assembled, and Oxford was fortified. The place was made impregnable in those days of feeble artillery. The author of the *Gesta Stephani* had pointed out, many centuries before, that Oxford, if properly defended, could never be taken, thanks to the network of streams that surrounds her. Though the citizens worked grudgingly and slowly, the trenches were at last completed. The earthworks—a double line—ran in and out of the interlacing streams. A Parliamentary force on Headington Hill seems to have been unable to play on the city with artillery. Barbed arrows were served out to the scholars, who formed a regiment of more than six hundred men. The Queen held her little court in Merton, in the Warden's lodgings. Clarendon gives rather a humorous account of the discontent of the fine ladies:—'The town was full of lords (besides those of the Council), and of persons of the best quality, with very many

ladies, who, when not pleased themselves, kept others from being so.' Oxford never was so busy and so crowded; letters, society, war, were all confused; there were excursions against Brown at Abingdon, and alarms from Fairfax on Headington Hill. The siege, from May 22nd to June 5th, was almost a farce. The Parliamentary generals 'fought with perspective glasses.' Neither Cromwell at Wytham, nor Brown at Wolvercot, pushed matters too hard. When two Puritan regiments advanced on Hinksey, Mr. Smyth blazed away at them from his house. As in Zululand, any building made a respectable fort, when cannon-balls had so little penetrative power, or when artillery was not at the front. Oxford was surrendered, with other places of arms, after Naseby, and—Presbyterians became heads of Colleges!

V

SOME SCHOLARS OF THE RESTORATION

V

SOME SCHOLARS OF THE RESTORATION

In Merton Chapel a little mural tablet bears the crest, the name, and the dates of the birth and death, of Antony Wood. He has been our guide in these sketches of Oxford life, as he must be the guide of the gravest and most exact historians. No one who cares for the past of the University should think without pity and friendliness of this lonely scholar, who in his lifetime was unpitied and unbefriended. We have reached the period in which he lived and died, in the midst of changes of Church and State, and surrounded by more worldly scholars, whose letters remain to testify that, in the reign of the Second Charles, Oxford was modern Oxford. In the epistles of Humphrey Prideaux,

student of Christ Church, we recognise the foibles of the modern University, the love of gossip, the internecine criticism, the greatness of little men whom *rien ne peut plaire*.

Antony Wood was a scholar of a different sort, of a sort that has never been very common in Oxford. He was a perfect dungeon of books; but he wrote as well as read, which has never been a usual practice in his University. Wood was born in 1632, in one of the old houses opposite Merton, perhaps in the curious ancient hall which has been called Beham, Bream, and *Bohemiæ Aula*, by various corruptions of the original spelling. As a boy, Wood must have seen the siege of Oxford, which he describes not without humour. As a young man, he watched the religious revolution which introduced Presbyterian Heads of Houses, and sent Puritanical captains of horse, like Captain James Wadsworth, to hunt for 'Papistical reliques' and 'massing stuffs' among the property of the President of C. C. C. and the Dean of Ch. Ch. (1646-1648). In 1650

CHRISTCHURCH MEADOWS
FROM THE RIVER.

he saw the Chancellorship of Oliver Cromwell; in 1659 he welcomed the Restoration, and rejoiced that 'the King had come to his own again.' The tastes of an antiquary combined, with the natural reaction against Puritanism, to make Antony Wood a High Churchman, and not averse to Rome, while he had sufficient breadth of mind to admire Thomas Hobbes, the patriarch of English learning. But Wood had little room in his heart or mind for any learning save that connected with the University. Oxford, the city, and the colleges, the remains of the old religious art, the customs, the dresses—these things he adored with a loverlike devotion, which was utterly unrewarded. He owed no office to the University, and he was even expelled (1693) for having written sharply against Clarendon. This did not abate his zeal, nor prevent him from passing all his days, and much of his nights, in the study and compilation of University history.

The author of Wood's biography has left a picture of his sombre and laborious old

age. He rose at four o'clock every morning. He scarcely tasted food till supper-time. At the hour of the College dinner he visited the booksellers' shops, where he was sure not to be disturbed by the gossip of dons, young and old. After supper he would smoke his pipe and drink his pot of ale in a tavern. It was while he took this modest refreshment, before old age came upon him, that Antony once fell in, and fell out, with Dick Peers. This Dick was one of the men employed by Dr. Fell, the Dean of Ch. Ch., to translate Wood's *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* into Latin. The translation gave rise to a number of literary quarrels. As Dean of Ch. Ch., Dr. Fell yielded to the besetting sin of deans, and fancied himself the absolute master of the University, if not something superior to mortal kind. An autocrat of this sort had no scruples about changing Wood's copy whenever he differed from Wood in political or religious opinion. Now Antony, as we said, had eyes to discern the greatness of Hobbes, whom the

Dean considered no better than a Deist or an Atheist. The Dean therefore calmly altered all that Wood had written of the Philosopher of Malmesbury, and so maligned Hobbes that the old man, meeting the King in Pall Mall, begged leave to reply in his own defence. Charles allowed the dispute to go on, and Hobbes hit Fell rather hard. The Dean retorted with the famous expression about *irritabile illud et vanissimum Malmesburiense animal.* This controversy amused Oxford, but bred bad feeling between Antony Wood and Dick Peers, the translator of his work, and the tool of the Dean of Ch. Ch. Prideaux (*Letters to John Ellis*; Camden Society, 1875) describes the battles in city taverns between author and translator.

'I suppose that you have heard of the continuall feuds, and often battles, between the author and the translator; they had a skirmish at Sol Hardeing [keeper of a tavern in All Saints' parish], another at the printeing house [the Sheldonian theatre], and several other places.'

From the record of these combats, we learn

that the recluse Antony was a man of his hands:—

'As Peers always cometh off with a bloody nose or a black eye, he was a long time afraid to goe annywhere where he might chance to meet his too powerful adversary, for fear of another drubbing, till he was pro-proctor, and now Woods (*sic*) is as much afraid to meet him, least he should exercise his authority upon him. And although he be a good bowzeing blad, yet it hath been observed that never since his adversary hath been in office hath he dared to be out after nine, least he should meet him and exact the rigor of the statute upon him.'

The statute required all scholars to be in their rooms before Tom had ceased ringing. It was, perhaps, too rash to say that the Oxford of the Restoration was already modern Oxford. The manners of the students were, so to speak, more accentuated. However much the lecturer in Idolology may dislike the method and person of the Reader in the Mandingo language, these two learned men do not box in taverns, nor take off their coats if they meet each other at the Clarendon Press. People are careful not to pitch into

each other in that way, though the temper which confounds opponents for their theory of irregular verbs is not at all abated. As Wood grew in years he did not increase in honours. 'He was a mere scholar,' and consequently might expect from the greater number of men disrespect. When he was but sixty-four, he looked eighty at least. His dress was not elegant, 'cleanliness being his chief object.' He rarely left his rooms, that were papered with MSS., and where every table and chair had its load of books and yellow parchments from the College muniment rooms. When strangers came to Oxford with letters of recommendation, the recluse would leave his study, and gladly lead them about the town, through Logic Lane to Queen's, which had not then the sublimely classical front, built by Hawksmoor, 'but suggested by Sir Christopher Wren.' It is worthy of his genius. Wood died in 1695, 'forgiving every one.' He could well afford to do so. In his *Athenæ Oxonienses* he had written the lives of all his enemies.

Wood, 'being a mere scholar,' could, of course, expect nothing but disrespect in a place like Oxford. His younger contemporary, Humphrey Prideaux, was, in the Oxford manner, a man of the world. He was the son of a Cornish squire, was educated at Westminster under Busby (that awful pedagogue, whose birch seems so near a memory), got a studentship at Christ Church in 1668, and took his B.A. degree in 1672. Here it may be observed that men went up quite as late in life then as they do now, for Prideaux was twenty-four years old when he took his degree. Fell was Dean of Christ Church, and was showing laudable zeal in working the University Press. What a pity it is that the University Press of to-day has become a trading concern, a shop for two-penny manuals and penny primers! It is scarcely proper that the University should at once organise examinations and sell the manuals which contain the answers to the questions most likely to be set. To return to Fell; he made Prideaux edit Lucius

Florus, and publish the *Marmora Oxoniensia*, which came out 1676. We must not suppose, however, that Prideaux was an enthusiastic archæologist. He did the *Marmora* because the Dean commanded it, and because educated people were at that period not uninterested in Greek art. At the present hour one may live a lifetime in Oxford and only learn, by the accident of examining passmen in the Arundel Room, that the University possesses any marbles. In the walls of the Arundel Room (on the ground-floor in the Schools' quadrangle) these touching remains of Hellas are interred. There are the funereal stelæ, with their quiet expression of sorrow, of hope, of resignation. The young man, on his tombstone, is represented in the act of rising and taking the hand of a friend. He is bound on his latest journey.

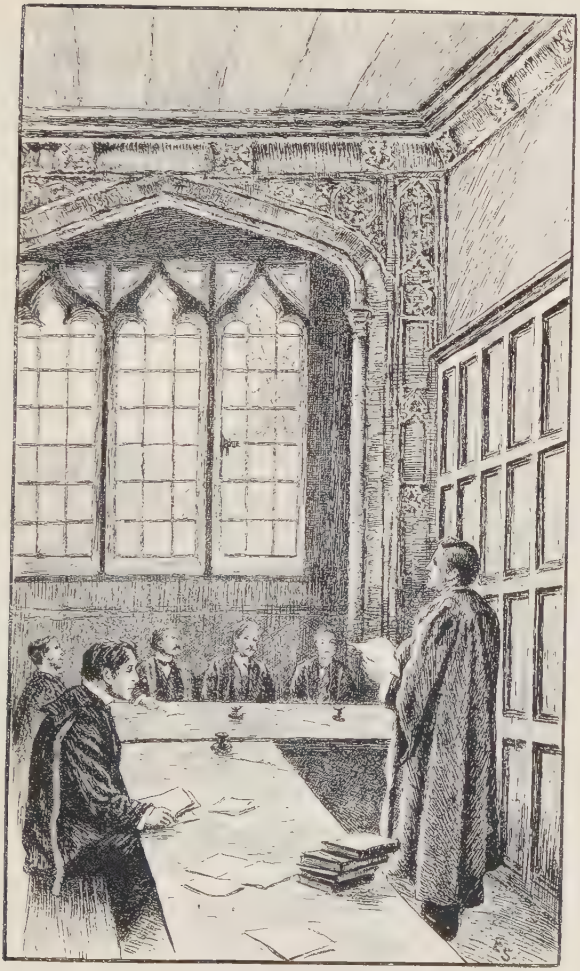
'He goeth forth unto the unknown land,
Where wife nor child may follow; thus far tell
The lingering clasp of hand in faithful hand,
And that brief carven legend, *Friend, farewell.*

O pregnant sign, profound simplicity!
All passionate pain and fierce remonstrating
Being wholly purged, leave this mere memory,
Deep but not harsh, a sad and sacred thing.'[1]

The lady chooses from a coffer a trinket, or a ribbon. It is her last toilette she is making, with no fear and no regret. Again, the long-severed souls are meeting with delight in the home of the just made perfect.

Even in the Schools, these scraps of Greek lapidary's work seem beautiful to us, in their sober and cheerful acceptance of life and death. We hope, in Oxford, that the study of ancient art, as well as of ancient literature, may soon be made possible. These tangible relics of the past bring us very near to the heart and the life of Greece, and waken a kindly enthusiasm in every one who approaches them. In Humphrey Prideaux's letters there is not a trace of any such feeling. He does his business, but it is hack-work. In this he differs from the modern student, but in his caustic description

[1] Poems by Ernest Myers. London, 1877.



A LECTURE-ROOM
IN
MAGDALEN COLLEGE.

of the rude and witless society of the place he is modern enough. In his letters to his friend, John Ellis, of the State Paper Office, it is plain that Prideaux wants to get preferment. His taste and his ambition alike made him detest the heavy, beer-drinking doctors, the fast 'All Souls gentlemen,' and the fossils of stupidity who are always plentifully imbedded in the soil of University life. Fellowships were then sold, at Magdalen and New, when they were not given by favour. Prideaux grumbles (July 28th, 1674) at the laxness of the Commissioners, who should have exposed this abuse: 'In town, one of their inquirys is whether any of the scholars weare pantaloons or periwigues, or keep dogs.' The great dispute about dogs, which raged at a later date in University College, had already begun to disturb dons and undergraduates. The choice language of Oxford contempt was even then extant, and Prideaux, like Grandison in *Daniel Deronda*, spoke curtly of the people whom he did not like as 'brutes.' 'Pembroke—the fittest colledge

in the town for brutes.' The University did not encourage certain 'players' who had paid the place a visit, and the players, in revenge, had gone about the town at night and broken the windows.

When the journey from London to Oxford is so easily performed, it is amusing to read of Prideaux's miserable adventures, in the diligence, between a lady of easy manners, a 'pitiful rogue,' and two undergraduates who 'sordidly affected debauchery.'

> 'This ill company made me very miserable all the way. Only once I could not but heartily laugh to see Fincher be sturdyly belaboured by five or six carmen with whips and prong staves for provoking them with some of his extravagant frolics.'

The 'violent affection to vice' in the University, or in the country, was, of course, the reaction against the godliness of Puritan captains of horse. Another form of the reaction is discernible in the revived High Church sentiments of Prideaux, Wood, and most of the students of the time.

The manners of the undergraduates were not much better than those of the pot-house haunting seniors. Dr. Good, the Master of Balliol, 'a good old toast,' had much trouble with his students.

'There is, over against Balliol College, a dingy, horrid, scandalous ale-house, fit for none but draymen and tinkers, and such as, by going there, have made themselves equally scandalous. Here the Balliol men continually, and by perpetuall bubbing, add art to their natural stupidity, to make themselves perfect sots.'

The envy and jealousy of the inferior colleges, alas! have put about many things, in these latter days, to the discredit of the Balliol men, but not even Humphrey Prideaux would, out of all his stock of epithets, choose 'sottish' and 'stupid.' In these old times, however, Dr. Good had to call the men together, and—

'Inform them of the mischiefs of that hellish liquor called ale; but one of them, not so tamely to be preached out of his beloved liquor, made answer that the Vice-Chancelour's men drank ale at the "Split Crow," and why should not they too?'

On this, old Dr. Good posted off to the Vice-Chancellor, who, 'being a lover of old ale' himself, returned a short answer to the head of Balliol. The old man went back to his college, and informed his fellows, 'that he was assured there were no hurt in ale, so that now they may be sots by authority.' Christ Church men were not more sober. David Whitford, who had been the tutor of Shirley the poet, was found lying dead in his bed: 'he had been going to take a dram for refreshment, but death came between the cup and the lips, and this is the end of Davy.' Prideaux records, in the same feeling style, that small-pox carried off many of the undergraduates, 'besides my brother,' a student at Corpus.

The University Press supplied Prideaux with gossip. They printed 'a book against Hobs,' written by Clarendon. Hobbes was the heresiarch of the time, and when an unhappy fellow of Merton hanged himself, the doctrines of Hobbes were said to have prompted him to the deed. To return to

the Press. 'Our Christmas book will be Cornelius Nepos. . . . Our marbles are now printing.' Prideaux, as has been said, took no interest in his own work.

'I coat (quote) a multitude of authors; if people think the better of me for that, I will think the worse of them for their judgement. It beeing soe easyly a thinge to make this specious show, he must be a fool that cannot gain whatsoever repute is to be gotten by it. If people will admire him for this, they may; I shall admire such for nothing else but their good indexs. As long as books have these, on what subject may we not coat as many others as we please, and never have read one of them?'

It is not easy to gather from this confession whether Prideaux had or had not read the books he 'coated.' It is certain that Dean Aldrich (and here again we recognise the eternal criticism of modern Oxford) held a poor opinion of Humphrey Prideaux. Aldrich said Prideaux was 'incorrect,' 'muddy-headed,' 'he would do little or nothing besides heaping up notes'; 'as for MSS. he would not trouble himself about

any, but rest wholly upon what had been done to his hands by former editors.' This habit of carping, this trick of collecting notes, this inability to put a work through, this dawdling erudition, this horror of manuscripts, every Oxford man knows them, and feels those temptations which seem to be in the air. Oxford is a discouraging place. College drudgery absorbs the hours of students in proportion to their conscientiousness. They have only the waste odds-and-ends of time for their own labours. They live in an atmosphere of criticism. They collect notes, they wait, they dream; their youth goes by, and the night comes when no man can work. The more praise to the tutors and lecturers who decipher the records of Assyria, or patiently collate the manuscripts of the *Iliad*, who not only teach what is already known, but add to the stock of knowledge, and advance the boundaries of scholarship and science.

One lesson may be learned from Prideaux's cynical letters, which is still worth

the attention of every young Oxford student who is conscious of ambition, of power, and of real interest in letters. He can best serve his University by coming out of her, by declining college work, and by devoting himself to original study in some less exhausted air, in some less critical society.

Among the aversions of Humphrey Prideaux, were the 'gentlemen of All Souls.' They certainly showed extraordinary impudence when they secretly employed the University Press to print off copies of Marc Antonio's engravings after Giulio Romano's drawings. It chanced that Fell visited the press rather late one evening, and found 'his press working at such an imployment. The prints and plates he hath seased, and threatened the owners of them with expulsion.' 'All Souls,' adds Prideaux, 'is a scandalous place.' Yet All Souls was the college of young Mr. Guise, an Arabic scholar, 'the greatest miracle in the knowledge of that I ever heard of.' Guise died of smallpox while still very young.

Thus Prideaux prattles on, about Admiral Van Tromp, 'a drunken greazy Dutchman,' whom Speed, of St. John's, conquered in boozing; of the disputes about races in Port Meadow; of the breaking into the Mermaid Tavern. 'We Christ Church men bear the blame of it, our ticks, as the noise of the town will have it, amounting to £1500.' Thus Christ Church had little cause to throw the first stone at Balliol. Prideaux shows little interest in letters, little in the press, though he lived in palmy days of printing, in the time of the Elzevirs; none at all in the educational work of the place. He sneers at the Puritans, and at the controversy on 'The Foundations of Hell Torments shaken and removed.' He admits that Locke 'is a man of very good converse,' but is chiefly concerned to spy out the movements of the philosopher, suspected of sedition, and to report them to Ellis in town. About the new buildings, as of the beautiful western gateway, where Great Tom is hung, the work of Wren, Prideaux says little; St. Mary's

was suffering restoration, and 'the old men,' including Wood, we may believe, 'exceedingly exclaim against it.' That is the way of Oxford, a college is constantly rebuilding amid the protests of the rest of the University. There is no question more common, or less agreeable than this, 'What are you doing to your tower?' or 'What are you doing to your hall, library, or chapel?' No one ever knows; but we are always doing something, and working men for ever sit, and drink beer, on the venerable roofs.

Long intercourse with Prideaux's letters, and mournful memories of Oxford new buildings, tempt a writer to imitate Prideaux's spirit. Let us shut up his book, where he leaves Oxford, in 1686, to become rector of Saham-Toney, in Norfolk, and marry a wife, though, says he, 'I little thought I should ever come to this.'

VI

HIGH TORY OXFORD

VI

HIGH TORY OXFORD

THE name of her late Majesty Queen Anne has for some little time been a kind of party watch-word. Many harmless people have an innocent loyalty to this lady, make themselves her knights (as Mary Antoinette has still her sworn champions in France and Mary Stuart in Scotland), buy the plate of her serene period, and imitate the dress. To many moral critics in the press, however, Queen Anne is a kind of abomination. I know not how it is, but the terms 'Queen Anne furniture and blue china' have become words of almost slanderous railing. Any didactic journalist who uses them is certain at once to fall heavily on the artistic reputation of Mr. Burne Jones, to rebuke the philosophy of Mr. Pater, and to hint that

the entrance-hall of the Grosvenor Gallery is that 'by-way' with which Bunyan has made us familiar. In the changes of things our admiration of the Augustan age of our literature, the age of Addison and Steele, of Marlborough and Aldrich, has become a sort of reproach. It may be that our modern preachers know but little of that which they traduce. At all events, the Oxford of Queen Anne's time was not what they call 'un-English,' but highly conservative, and as dull and beer-bemused as the most manly taste could wish it to be.

The *Spectator* of the ingenious Sir Richard Steele gives us many a glimpse of non-juring Oxford. The old fashion of Sanctity (Mr. Addison says, in the *Spectator*, No. 494) had passed away; nor were appearances of Mirth and Pleasure looked upon as the Marks of a Carnal Mind. Yet the Puritan Rule was not so far forgotten, but that Mr. Anthony Henley (a Gentleman of Property) could remember how he had stood for a Fellowship in a certain College whereof a great Inde-

pendent Minister was Governor. As Oxford at this Moment is much vexed in her Mind about Examinations, wherein, indeed, her whole Force is presently expended, I make no scruple to repeat the account of Mr. Henley's Adventure:—

'The Youth, according to Custom, waited on the Governor of his College, to be examined. He was received at the Door by a Servant, who was one of that gloomy Generation that were then in Fashion. He conducted him with great Silence and Seriousness to a long Gallery which was darkened at Noon-day, and had only a single Candle burning in it. After a short stay in this melancholy Apartment, he was led into a Chamber hung with black, where he entertained himself for some time by the glimmering of a Taper, till at length the Head of the College came out to him from an inner Room, with half a dozen Night Caps upon his Head, and a religious Horror in his Countenance. The Young Man trembled; but his Fears increased when, instead of being asked what progress he had made in Learning, he was ask'd "how he abounded in Grace?" His *Latin* and *Greek* stood him in little stead. He was to give an account only of the state of his Soul—whether he was of the Number of the Elect; what was the Occasion of his Conversion; upon what Day of the Month and Hour of the

Day it happened; how it was carried on, and when completed. The whole Examination was summed up in one short Question, namely, *Whether he was prepared for Death?* The Boy, who had been bred up by honest Parents, was frighted out of his wits by the solemnity of the Proceeding, and by the last dreadful Interrogatory, so that, upon making his Escape out of this House of Mourning, he could never be brought a second Time to the Examination, as not being able to go through the Terrors of it.'

By the year 1705, when Tom Hearne, of St. Edmund's Hall, began to keep his diary, the 'honest folk'—that is, the High Churchmen—had the better of the Independent Ministers. The Dissenters had some favour at Court, but in the University they were looked upon as utterly reprobate. From the *Reliquiæ* of Hearne (an antiquarian successor of Antony Wood, a *bibliophile*, an archæologist, and as honest a man as Jacobitism could make him) let us quote an example of Heaven's wrath against Dissenters:—

'*Aug.* 6, 1706. We have an account from Whitchurch, in Shropshire, that the Dissenters there having prepared a great quantity of bricks to erect a spacious conventicle, a destroying angel

came by night and spoiled them all, and confounded their Babel in the beginning, to their great mortification.'

Hearne's common-place books are an amusing source of information about Oxford society in the years of Queen Anne, and of the Hanoverian usurper. Tom Hearne was a Master of Arts of St. Edmund's Hall, and at one time Deputy-Librarian of the Bodleian. He lost this post because he would not take 'the wicked oaths' required of him, but he did not therefore leave Oxford. His working hours were passed in preparing editions of antiquarian books, to be printed in very limited number, on ordinary and LARGE PAPER. It was the joy of Tom's existence to see his editions become first scarce, then VERY SCARCE, while the price augmented in proportion to the rarity. When he was not reading in his rooms he was taking long walks in the country, tracing Roman walls and roads, and exploring Woodstock Park for the remains of 'the labyrinth,' as he calls the Maze of Fair

Rosamund. In these strolls he was sometimes accompanied by undergraduates, even gentlemen of noble family, 'which gave cause to some to envy our happiness.' Hearne was a social creature, and had a heart, as he shows by the entry about the death of his 'very dear friend, Mr. Thomas Cherry, A.M., to the great grief of all that knew him, being a gentleman of great beauty, singular modesty, of wonderful good nature, and most excellent principles.'

The friends of Hearne were chiefly, perhaps solely, what he calls 'honest men,' supporters of the Stuart family, and always ready to drink his Majesty's (King James') health. They would meet in 'Antiquity Hall,' an old house near Wadham, and smoke their honest pipes. They held certain of the opinions of 'the Hebdomadal Meeting,' satirised by Steele in the *Spectator* (No. 43). 'We are much offended at the Act for importing *French* wines. A bottle or two of good solid Edifying Port, at honest *George's*, made a Night cheerful, and

NEW
COLLEGE.

threw off Reserve. But this plaguy *French* Claret will not only cost us more Money but do us less good.' Hearne had a poor opinion of 'Captain Steele,' and of 'one Tickle: this Tickle is a pretender to poetry.' He admits that, though 'Queen's people are angry at the *Spectator*, and the common-room say 'tis silly dull stuff, men that are indifferent commend it highly, as it deserves.' Some other satirist had a plate etched, representing Antiquity Hall—a caricature of Tom's antiquarian engravings. It may be seen in Skelton's book.

Thanks to Hearne it is easy to reproduce the common-room gossip, and the more treasonable talk of honest men at Antiquity Hall. The learned were much interested, as they usually are at Oxford, in theological discussion. Some one proved, by an ingenious syllogism, that all men are to be saved; but Hearne had the better of this Latitudinarian, easily demonstrating that the comfortable argument does not meet the case of madmen, and of deaf-mutes, whom Tom did

not expect to meet in a future state. The ingenious, though depressing speculations of Mr. Dodwell, were also discussed:—'He makes the air the receptacle of all souls, good and bad, and that they are under the power of the D——l, he being prince of the air.' 'The less perfectly good' hang out, if we may say so, 'in the space between earth and the clouds,' all which is subtle, and creditable to Mr. Dodwell's invention, but not susceptible of exact demonstration. The whole controversy is an interesting specimen of Queen Anne philosophy, which, with all respect for the taste of the period, we need not wish to see revived. The Bishop of Worcester, for example, 'expects the end of the world about nine years hence.' While the theology of Oxford is being mentioned, the zeal of Dr. Miller, Regius Professor of Greek, must not be forgotten. The learned Professor endeavoured to convert, and even 'writ a Letter to Mrs. Bracegirdle, giving her great encomiums (as having himself been often to see plays acted whilst they

continued here), upon account of her excellent qualifications, and persuading her to give over this loose way of living, and betake herself to such a kind of life as was more innocent, and would gain her more credit.' The Professor's advice was wasted on 'Bracegirdle the brown.'

Politics were naturally much discussed in these doubtful years, when the Stuarts, it was thought, had still a chance to win their own again. In 1706, Tom says, 'The great health now is "The Cube of Three," which is the number 27, *i.e.* the number of the protesting Lords.' The University was most devoted, as far as drinking toasts constitutes loyalty. In Hearne's common-place book is carefully copied out this 'Scotch Health to K. J.':—

> 'He's o'er the seas and far awa',
> He's o'er the seas and far awa';
> Altho' his back be at the wa'
> We 'll drink his health that 's far awa'.

The words live, and ring strangely out of

that dusty past. The song survives the throne, and sounds pathetically, somehow, as one has heard it chanted, in days as dead as the year 1711, at suppers that seem as ancient almost as the festivities of Thomas Hearne. It is not unpleasant to remember that the people who sang could also fight, and spilt their blood as well as their 'edifying port.' If the Southern 'honest men' had possessed hearts for anything but tippling, the history of England would have been different.

When 'the allyes and the French fought a bloudy battle near Mons' (1709, 'Malplaquet') the Oxford honest men, like Colonel Henry Esmond, thought 'there was not any the least reason of bragging.' The young King of England, under the character of the Chevalier St. George, 'shewed abundance of undaunted courage and resolution, led up his troups with unspeakable bravery, appeared in the utmost dangers, and at last was wounded.' Marlborough's victories were sneered at, his new palace

of Blenheim was said to be not only ill-built, but haunted by signs of evil omen.

It was not always safe to say what one thought about politics at Oxford. One Mr. A. going to one Mr. Tonson, a barber, put the barber and his wife in a ferment (they being rascally Whigs) by maintaining that the hereditary right was in the P. of W. Tonson laid information against the gentleman; 'which may be a warning to honest men not to enter into topicks of this nature with barbers.' One would not willingly, even now, discuss the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Ministers with the person who shaves one. There are opportunities and temptations to which no decent person should be wantonly exposed. The bad effect of Whiggery on the temper was evident in this, that 'the Mohocks are all of the Whiggish gang, and indeed all Whigs are looked upon as such Mohocks, their principles and doctrines leading thus to all manner of barbarity and inhumanity.' So true is it that Conservatives

are all lovers of peace and quiet, that (May 29, 1715) 'last night a good part of the Presbyterian meeting-house in Oxford was pulled down. The people ran up and down the streets, crying, *King James the Third! The true king! No Usurper.* In the evening they pulled a good part of the Quakers' and Anabaptists' meeting-houses down. The heads of houses have represented that it was begun by the Whiggs.' Probably the heads of houses reasoned on *a priori* principles, when they arrived at this remarkable conclusion.

In consequence of the honesty, frankness, and consistency of his opinions, Mr. Hearne ran his head in danger, when King George came to the throne which has ever since been happily settled in the possession of the Hanoverian line. A Mr. Urry, a Non-juror, had to warn him, saying, 'Do you not know that they have a mind to hang you if they can, and that you have many enemies who are very ready to do it?' In spite of this, Hearne, in his diaries, still calls George I., the Duke of

Brunswick, and the Whigs, 'that fanatical crew.' John, Duke of Marlborough, he styles 'that villain the Duke.' We have had enough, perhaps, of Oxford politics, which were not much more prejudiced in the days of the Duke than in those of Mr. Gladstone. Hearne's allusions to the contemporary state of buildings and of college manners are often rather instructive. In All Souls the Whigs had a feast on the day of King Charles's martyrdom. They had a dinner dressed of woodcock, 'whose heads they cut off, in contempt of the memory of the blessed martyr.' These men were 'low Churchmen, more shame to them.' The All Souls men had already given up the custom of wandering about the College on the night of January 14th, with sticks and poles, in quest of the mallard. That 'swopping' bird, still justly respected, was thought, for many ages, to linger in the College of which he is the protector. But now all hope of recovering him alive is lost, and it is reserved for the excavator of the future to marvel over the

fossil bones of the 'swopping, swopping mallard.'

As an example of the paganism of Queen Anne's reign—quite a different thing from the 'Neo-paganism' which now causes so much anxiety to the moral press-man—let us note the affecting instance of Geffery Ammon. 'He was a merry companion, and his conversation was much courted.' Geffery had but little sense of religion. He is now buried on the west side of Binsey churchyard, near St. Margaret's well. Geffery selected Binsey for the place of his sepulchre, because he was partial to the spot, having often shot snipe there. In order to moisten his clay, he desired his friend Will Gardner, a boatman of Oxford, who was accustomed to row him down the river, to put now and then a bottle of ale by his grave when he came that way; an injunction which was punctually complied with.

Oxford lost in Hearne's time many of her old buildings. It is said, with a dreadful appearance of truth, that Oxford is now to

THE
RIVER AT
BINSEY.

lose some of the few that are left. Corpus and Merton, if they are not belied, mean to pull down the old houses opposite Merton, halls and houses consecrated to the memory of Antony Wood, and to build lecture-rooms *and houses for married dons* on the site. The topic, for one who is especially bound to pray for Merton (and who now does so with unusual fervour), is most painful. A view of the 'proposed new buildings,' in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy (1879), depresses the soul. In the same spirit Hearne says (March 28, 1671), 'It always grieves me when I go through Queen's College, to see the ruins of the old chapell next to High Street, the area of which now lies open (the building being most of it pulled down) and trampled upon by dogs, etc., as if the ground had never been consecrated. Nor do the Queen's Coll. people take any care, but rather laught at it when 'tis mentioned.' In 1722 'the famous postern-gate called the *Turl* Gate (a corruption for *Thorold* Gate) was 'pulled down by one Dr. Walker, who

lived by it, and pretended that it was a detriment to his house. As long ago as 1705, they had pulled down the building of Peckwater quadrangle, in Ch. Ch.' Queen's also 'pulled down the old refectory, which was on the west side of the old quadrangle, and was a fine old structure that I used to admire much.' It appears that the College was also anxious to pull down the chamber of King Henry v. This is a strange craze for destruction, that some time ago endangered the beautiful library of Merton, a place where one can fancy that Chaucer or Wyclif may have studied. Oxford will soon have little left of the beauty and antiquity of *Patey's Quad* in Merton, as represented in our illustration. What the next generation will think of the multitudinous new buildings, it is not hard to conjecture. Imitative experiments, without style or fancy in structure or decoration, and often more than mediævally uncomfortable, they will seem but evidences of Oxford's love of destruction. People of

MERTON
COLLEGE.

Hearne's way of thinking, people who respect antiquity, protest in vain, and, like Hearne, must be content sadly to enjoy what is left of grace and dignity. He died before Oxford had quite become the Oxford of Gibbon's autobiography.

VII

GEORGIAN OXFORD

VII

GEORGIAN OXFORD

Oxford has usually been described either by her lovers or her malcontents. She has suffered the extremes of filial ingratitude and affection. There is something in the place that makes all her children either adore or detest her; and it is difficult, indeed, to pick out the truth concerning her past social condition from the satires and the encomiums. Nor is it easy to say what qualities in Oxford, and what answering characteristics in any of her sons, will beget the favourable or the unfavourable verdict. Gibbon, one might have thought, saw the sunny, and Johnson the shady, side of the University. With youth, and wealth, and liberty, with a set of three beautiful rooms in that 'stately pile, the new building

of Magdalen College,' Gibbon found nothing in Oxford to please him—nothing to admire, nothing to love. From his poor and lofty rooms in Pembroke Gate-tower the hypochondriac Johnson—rugged, anxious, and conscious of his great unemployed power—looked down on a much more pleasant Oxford, on a city and on schools that he never ceased to regard with affection. This contrast is found in the opinions of our contemporaries. One man will pass his time in sneering at his tutors and his companions, in turning listlessly from study to study, in following false tendencies, and picking up scraps of knowledge which he despises, and in later life he will detest his University. There are wiser and more successful students, who yet bear away a grudge against the stately mother of us all, that so easily can disregard our petty spleens and ungrateful rancour. Mr. Lowe's most bitter congratulatory addresses to the 'happy Civil Engineers,' and his unkindest cuts at ancient history, and at the old philosophies

which 'on Argive heights divinely sung,' move her not at all. Meanwhile, the majority of men are more kindly compact, and have more natural affections, and on them the memory of their earliest friendships, and of that beautiful environment which Oxford gave to their years of youth, is not wholly wasted.

There are more Johnsons, happily, in this matter, than Gibbons. There is little need to repeat the familiar story of Johnson's life at Pembroke. He went up in the October term of 1728, being then nineteen years of age, and already full of that wide and miscellaneous classical reading which the Oxford course, then as now, somewhat discouraged. 'His figure and manner appeared strange' to the company in which he found himself; and when he broke silence it was with a quotation from Macrobius. To his tutor's lectures, as a later poet says, 'with freshman zeal he went'; but his zeal did not last out the discovery that the tutor was 'a heavy man,' and the fact that there was 'sliding

on Christ Church Meadow.' Have any of the artists who repeat, with perseverance, the most famous scenes in the Doctor's life —drawn him sliding on Christ Church meadows, sliding in these worn and clouted shoes of his, and with that figure which even the exercise of skating could not have made 'swan-like,' to quote the young lady in 'Pickwick'? Johnson was 'sconced' in the sum of twopence for cutting lecture; and it is rather curious that the amount of the fine was the same four hundred years earlier, when Master Stokes, of Cats' Hall (whose career we touched on in the second of these sketches), deserted his lessons. It was when he was thus sconced that Johnson made that reply which Boswell preserves 'as a specimen of the antithetical character of his wit' —'Sir, you have sconced me twopence for non-attendance on a lecture not worth a penny.'

Sconcing seems to have been the penalty for offences very various in degree. 'A young fellow of Balliol College having, upon

IN
CHRISTCHURCH
CATHEDRAL

some discontent, cut his throat very dangerously, the master of his College sent his servitor to the buttery-book to sconce him five shillings; 'and,' says the Doctor, 'tell him that the next time he cuts his throat I'll sconce him ten!' This prosaic punishment might perhaps deter some Werthers from playing with edged tools.

From Boswell's meagre account of Johnson's Oxford career we gather some facts which supplement the description of Gibbon. The future historian went into residence twenty-three years after Johnson departed without taking his degree. Gibbon was a gentleman commoner, and was permitted by the easy discipline of Magdalen to behave just as he pleased. He 'eloped,' as he says, from Oxford, as often as he chose, and went up to town, where he was by no means the ideal of 'the Manly Oxonian in London.' The fellows of Magdalen, possessing a revenue which private avarice might easily have raised to £30,000, took no interest in their pupils. Gibbon's tutor read a few

Latin plays with his pupil, in a style of dry and literal translation. The other fellows, less conscientious, passed their lives in tippling and tattling, discussing the 'Oxford Toasts,' and drinking other toasts to the king over the water. 'Some duties,' says Gibbon, 'may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars,' but 'the velvet cap was the cap of liberty,' and the gentleman commoner consulted only his own pleasure. Johnson was a poor scholar, and on him duties were imposed. He was requested to write an ode on the Gunpowder Plot, and Boswell thinks 'his vivacity and imagination must have produced something fine.' He neglected, however, with his usual indolence, this opportunity of producing something fine. Another exercise imposed on the poor was the translation of Mr. Pope's 'Messiah,' in which the young Pembroke man succeeded so well that, by Mr. Pope's own generous confession, future ages would doubt whether the English or the Latin piece was the original. Johnson complained

that no man could be properly inspired by the Pembroke 'coll,' or college beer, which was then commonly drunk by undergraduates, still guiltless of Rhine wines, and of collecting Chinese monsters.

Carmina vis nostri scribant meliora poetæ
Ingenium jubeas purior haustus alat.

In spite of the muddy beer, the poverty, and the 'bitterness mistaken for frolic,' with which Johnson entertained the other undergraduates round Pembroke gate, he never ceased to respect his College. 'His love and regard for Pembroke he entertained to the last,' while of his old tutor he said, 'a man who becomes Jorden's pupil becomes his son.' Gibbon's sneer is a foil to Johnson's kindliness. 'I applaud the filial piety which it is impossible for me to imitate. . . . To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligations, and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother.'

Johnson was a man who could take the

rough with the smooth, and, to judge by all accounts, the Oxford of the earlier half of the eighteenth century was excessively rough. Manners were rather primitive: a big fire burned in the centre of Balliol Hall, and round this fire, one night in every year, it is said that all the world was welcome to a feast of ale and bread and cheese. Every guest paid his shot by singing a song or telling a story; and one can fancy Johnson sharing in this barbaric hospitality. 'What learning can they have who are destitute of all principles of civil behaviour?' says a writer from whose journal (printed in 1746) Southey has made some extracts. The diarist was a Puritan of the old leaven, who visited Oxford shortly before Johnson's period, and who speaks of 'a power of gross darkness that may be felt constantly prevailing in that place of wisdom and of subtlety, but not of God. . . . In this wicked place the scholars are the rudest, most giddy, and unruly rabble, and most mischievous.' But this strange and unfriendly critic was a Noncon-

formist, in times when good Churchmen showed their piety by wrecking chapels and 'rabbling' ministers. In our days only the Davenport Brothers and similar professors of strange creeds suffer from the manly piety of the undergraduates.

Of all the carping, cross-grained, scandal-loving, Whiggish assailants of *Alma Mater*, the author of *Terræ Filius* was the most persistent. The first little volume which contains the numbers of this bi-weekly periodical (printed for R. Franklin, under Tom's Coffee-house, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, MDCCXXVI.) is not at all rare, and is well worth a desultory reading. What strikes one most in *Terræ Filius* is the religious discontent of the bilious author. One thinks, foolishly of course, of even Georgian Whigs as orthodox men, at least in their undergraduate days. The mere aspect of Mr. Leslie Stephen's work on the philosophers of the eighteenth century is enough to banish this pleasing delusion. The Deists and Freethinkers had their followers

in Johnson's day among the undergraduates, though scepticism, like Whiggery, was unpopular, and might be punished. Johnson says, that when he was a boy he was a lax *talker*, rather than a lax *thinker*, against religion; 'but lax talking against religion at Oxford would not be suffered.' The author of *Terræ Filius*, however, never omits a chance of sneering at our faith, and at the Church of England as by law established. In his description of the exercises of the Club of Wits, only one respectably clever epigram is quoted, beginning,—

'Since in religion all men disagree,
And some one God believe, some thirty, and some three.'

This production 'was voted heretical,' and burned by the hands of the small-beer drawer, while the author was expelled. In the author's advice to freshmen, he gives a not uninteresting sketch of these rudimentary creatures. The chrysalis, as described by the preacher of a University sermon, 'never,

in his wildest moments, dreamed of being a butterfly'; but the public schoolboy of the last century sometimes came up in what he conceived to be gorgeous attire. 'I observe, in the first place, that you no sooner shake off the authority of the birch but you affect to distinguish yourselves from your dirty schoolfellows by a new drugget, a pair of prim ruffles, a new bob-wig, and a brazen-hilted sword.' As soon as they arrived in Oxford, these youths were hospitably received 'amongst a parcel of honest, merry fellows, who think themselves obliged, in honour and common civility, to make you *damnable drunk*, and carry you, as they call it, a CORPSE to bed.' When this period of jollity is ended, the freshman must declare his views. He must see that he is in the fashion; 'and let your declarations be, that you are *Churchmen*, and that you believe as the *Church* believes. For instance, you have subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles; but never venture to explain the sense in which you subscribed them, because there are

various senses; so many, indeed, that scarce two men understand them in the same, and no *true Churchman* in that which the words bear, and in that which they were written.'

This is pretty plain speaking, and *Terræ Filius* enforces, by an historical example, the dangers of even political freethought. In 1714 the Constitution Club kept King George's birthday. The Constitutional Party was then the name which the Whigs took to themselves, though, thanks to the advance of civilisation, the Tories have fallen back upon the same. The Conservative undergraduates attacked the club, sallying forth from their Jacobite stronghold in Brasenose (as seen in our illustration), where the 'silly statue,' as Hearne calls it, was about that time erected. The Whigs took refuge in Oriel, the Tories assaulted the gates, and an Oriel man, firing out of his window, wounded a gownsman of Brasenose. The Tories, 'under terror of this dangerous and unexpected resistance, retreated from Oriel.' Yet such was the academic strength of the Jaco-

BRAZENOSE
COLLEGE.

bites and the Churchmen, that a Freethinker, or a 'Constitutioner,' could scarcely take his degree.

Terræ Filius, who lashes the dons for covetousness, greed, dissipation, rudeness, and stupidity, often corroborates the Puritan's report about the bad manners of the undergraduates. Yet Oxford, then as now, did not lack her exquisites, and her admirers of the fair. *Terræ Filius* thus describes a 'smart,' as these dandies were called—Mr. Frippery:—

'He is one of those who come in their academical undress, every morning between ten and eleven, to Lyne's Coffee-house; after which he takes a turn or two upon the park, or under Merton Wall, whilst the dull *regulars* are at dinner in their hall, according to statute; about one he dines alone in his chamber upon a boiled chicken or some pettitoes; after which he allows himself an hour at least to dress in, to make his afternoon's appearance at Lyne's; from whence he adjourns to Hamilton's about five; from whence (after strutting about the room for a while, and drinking a dram of citron), he goes to chapel, to show how genteelly he dresses, and how well he can chaunt. After prayers he drinks tea with some celebrated toast, and then waits upon her to Magdalen Grove or Paradise Garden, and back

again. He seldom eats any supper, and never reads anything but novels and romances.'

The dress of this hero and his friends must have made the streets more gay than do the bright-coloured flannel coats of our boating men.

'He is easily distinguished by a stiff silk gown, which rustles in the wind as he struts along; a flax tie-wig, or sometimes a long natural one, which reaches down below his [well, say below his waist]; a broad bully-cock'd hat, or a square cap of about twice the usual size; white stockings; thin Spanish leather shoes. His clothes lined with tawdry silk, and his shirt ruffled down the bosom as well as at the wrists.'

These 'smarts' cut no such gallant figure when they first arrived in Oxford, with their fathers (rusty old country farmers), in linsey-woolsey coats, greasy, sun-burnt heads of hair, clouted shoes, yarn stockings, flapping hats, with silver hatbands, and long muslin neck-cloths run with red at the bottom.

After this satire of the undergraduates we may look at the contemporary account-book of a Proctor. In 1752 Gilbert White of

THE
CANAL
FERRY.

Selborne was Proctor, and may have fined young Gibbon of Magdalen, who little thought that Oxford boasted an official who was to become an English classic. White paid some attention to dress, and got a feather-topp'd, grizzled wig from London; cost him £2 5s. He bought 'mountain wine, very old and good,' and had his crest engraved on his teaspoons, that everything might be handsome about him. When he treated the Masters of Arts in Oriel Hall they ate a hundred pounds weight of biscuits —not, we trust, without marmalade. 'A bowl of rum-punch from Horsman's' cost half-a-crown. Fancy a jolly Proctor sending out for bowls of rum-punch, and that in April! Eggs cost a penny each, and 'three oranges and a mouse-trap' ninepence.

White, a generous man, gave the Vice-Chancellor 'seven pounds of double-refined white sugar.' I like to fancy my learned friend, the Proctor, going to the present Vice-Chancellor's with a donation of white sugar! Manners have certainly changed in

the direction of severity. 'Share of the expense for Mr. Butcher's release' came to ten and sixpence. What had Mr. Butcher been doing? The Proctor went 'to Blenheim with Nan,' and it cost him fifteen and sixpence. Perhaps she was one of the 'Oxford Toasts' of a contemporary satire. Strawberries were fourpence a basket on the ninth of June; and on November 6, White lost one shilling 'at cards, in common room.' He went from Selborne to Oxford, 'in a post-chaise with Jenny Croke'; and he gave Jenny a 'round China-turene.' Tea cost eight shillings a-pound in 1752, while rum-punch was but half-a-crown a bowl. White's highest terminal battels were but £12, though he was a hospitable man, and would readily treat the other Proctor to a bowl of punch. It is well to remember White and Johnson when the Gibbon of that or any other day bewails the intellectual poverty of Oxford.

VIII

POETS AT OXFORD
SHELLEY AND LANDOR

VIII

POETS AT OXFORD: SHELLEY AND LANDOR

At any given time a large number of poets may be found among the undergraduates at Oxford, and the younger dons. It is not easy to say what becomes of all these pious bards, who are a marked and peculiar people while they remain in residence. The undergraduate poet is a not uninteresting study. He wears his hair long, and divides it down the middle. His eye is wild and wandering, and his manner absent, especially when he is called on to translate a piece of an ancient author in lecture. He does not 'read' much, in the technical sense of the term, but consumes all the novels that come in his way, and all the minor poetry. His own verses the poet may be heard declaim-

ing aloud, at unholy midnight hours, so that his neighbours have been known to break his windows with bottles, and then to throw in all that remained of the cold meats of a supper party, without interfering with the divine *afflatus*. When the college poet has composed a sonnet, ode, or what not, he sends it to the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, and it returns to him after many days. At last it appears in print, in *College Rhymes*, a collection of mild verse, which is (or was) printed at regular or irregular intervals, and was never seen except in the rooms of contributors. The poet also speaks at the Union, where his sentiments are either revolutionary, or so wildly conservative that he looks on Magna Charta as the first step on the path that leads to England's ruin. As a politician, the undergraduate poet knows no mean between Mr. Peter Taylor and King John. He has been known to found a Tory club, and shortly afterwards to swallow the formulæ of Mr. Bradlaugh.

The life of the poet is, not unnaturally, one

long warfare with his dons. He cannot conform himself to pedantic rules, which demand his return to college before midnight. Though often the possessor of a sweet vein of clerical and Kebleian verse, the poet does not willingly attend chapel; for indeed, as he sits up all night, it is cruel to expect him to arise before noon. About the poet's late habits a story is told, which seems authentic. A remarkable and famous contemporary singer was known to his fellow-undergraduates only by this circumstance, that his melodious voice was heard declaiming anapaests all through the ambrosial night. When the voice of the singer was lulled, three sharp taps were heard in the silence. This noise was produced by the bard's Scotch friend and critic in knocking the ashes out of his pipe. These feasts of reason are almost incompatible with the early devotion which, strangely enough, Shelley found time and inclination to attend.

Now it is (or was) the belief of undergraduates that you might break the deca-

logue and the laws of man in every direction with safety and the approval of the dons, if you only went regularly to chapel. As the poet cannot do this (unless he is a 'sleepless man'), his existence is a long struggle with the fellows and tutors of his college. The manners of poets vary, of course, with the tastes of succeeding generations. I have heard of two (Thyrsis and Corydon), 'who lived in Oxford as if it were a large country-house.'

Of other singers, the latest of the heavenly quire, it is invidiously said that they build shrines to Blue China and other ceramic abominations of the Philistine, and worship the same in their rooms. Of this sort it is not the moment to speak. Time has not proved them. But the old poets of ten years ago lived a militant life; they rarely took good classes (though they competed industriously for the Newdigate, writing in the metre of *Dolores*), and it not uncommonly happened that they left Oxford without degrees. They were often very agreeable

fellows, as long as one was in no way responsible for them; but it was almost impossible—human nature being what it is—that they should be much appreciated by tutors, proctors, and heads of houses. How could these worthy, learned, and often kind and courteous persons, know when they were dealing with a lad of genius, and when they had to do with an affected and pretentious donkey?

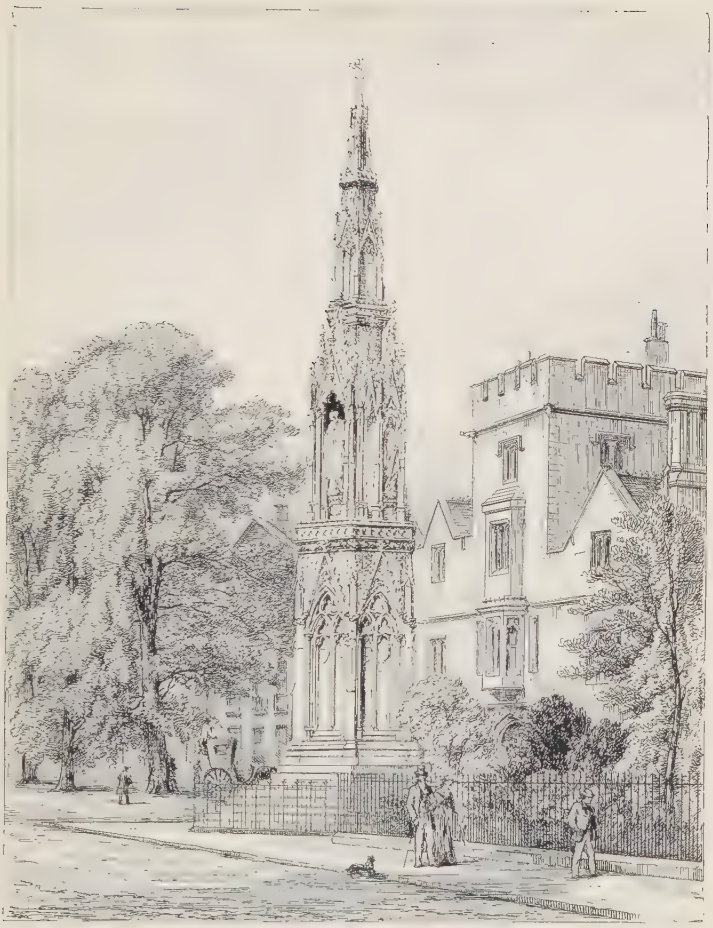
These remarks are almost the necessary preface to a consideration of the existence of Shelley and Landor at Oxford—the Oxford of 1793-1810. Whatever the effects may be on Shelleyan commentators, it must be said that, to the donnish eye, Percy Bysshe Shelley was nothing more or less than the ordinary Oxford poet, of the quieter type. In Walter Savage Landor, authority recognised a noisier and rowdier specimen of the same class. People who have to do with hundreds of young men at a time are unavoidably compelled to generalise. No don, that was a don, could have seen Shelley or Landor as

they are described to us without hastily classing them in the category of poets who would come to no good and do little credit to the college. Landor went up to Trinity College in 1793. It was the dreadful year of the Terror, when good Englishmen hated the cruel murderers of kings and queens. Landor was a good Englishman, of course, and he never forgave the French the public assassination of Marie Antoinette. But he must needs be a Jacobin, and wear his own unpowdered hair—the Poet thus declaring himself at once in the regular recognised fashion. 'For a portion of the time he certainly read hard, but the results he kept to himself; for here, as at Rugby, he declined everything in the shape of competition.' (Now competition is the essence of modern University study.) 'Though I wrote better Latin verses than any undergraduate or graduate in the University,' says Landor, 'I could never be persuaded by my tutor or friends to contend for any prize whatever.' The pleasantest and most profitable hours

that Landor could remember at Oxford 'were passed with Walter Birch in the Magdalen Walk, by the half-hidden Cherwell.' Hours like these are indeed the pleasantest and most profitable that any of us pass at Oxford. The one duty which that University, by virtue of its very nature, has never neglected, is the assembling of young men together from all over England, and giving them three years of liberty of life, of leisure, and of discussion, in scenes which are classical and peaceful. For these hours, the most fruitful of our lives, we are grateful to Oxford, as long as friendship lives; that is, as long as life and memory remain with us. And, 'if anything endure, if hope there be,' our conscious existence in the after-world would ask for no better companions than those who walked with us by the Isis and the Cherwell.

Landor called himself 'a Jacobin,' though his own letters show that he was as far as the most insolent young 'tuft' from relishing doctrines of human equality. He had

the reputation, however, of being not only a Jacobin, but 'a mad Jacobin'; too mad for Southey, who was then young, and a Liberal. 'Landor was obliged to leave the University for shooting at one of the Fellows through a window,' is the account which Southey gave of Landor's rustication. Now Fellows often put up with a great deal of horse-play. There is scarcely a more touching story than that of the don who for the first time found himself 'screwed up,' and fastened within his own oak. 'What am I to do?' the victim asked his sympathising scout, who was on the other, the free side of the oak. 'Well, sir, Mr. Muff, sir, when 'e's screwed up 'e sends for the blacksmith,' replied the servant. What a position for a man having authority, to be in the constant habit of sending for the blacksmith! Fellows have not very unfrequently been fired at with Roman candles, or bombarded with soda-water bottles full of gunpowder. One has also known sparrows shot from Balliol windows on the Martyrs' Memorial

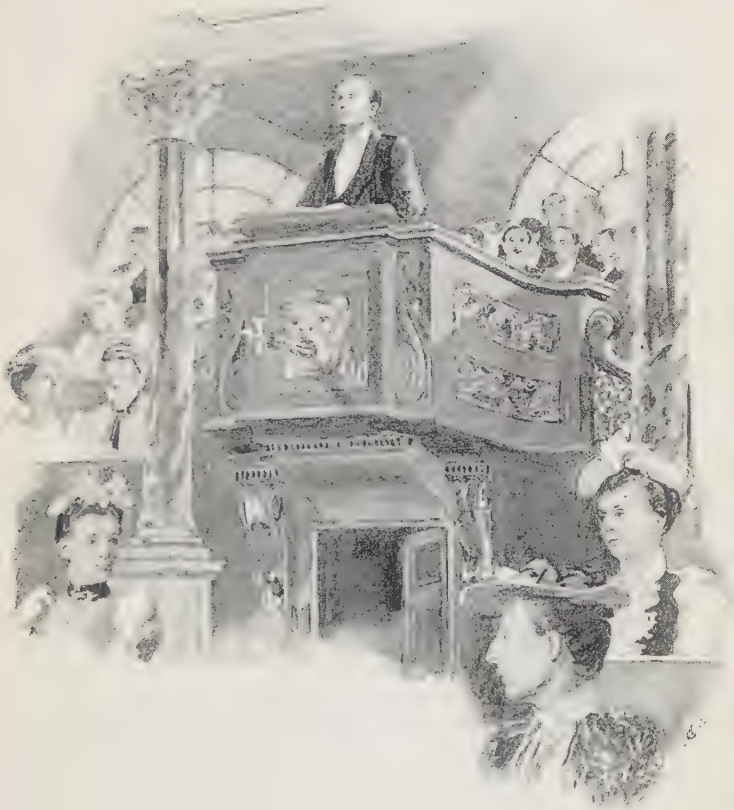


THE
MARTYR
MEMORIAL.

of our illustration. In this case, too, the sportsman was a poet. But deliberately to pot at a fellow, 'to go for him with a shot gun,' as the repentant American said he would do in future, after his derringer missed fire, is certainly a strong measure. No college which pretended to maintain discipline could allow even a poet to shoot thus wildly. In truth, Landor's offence has been exaggerated by Southey. It was nothing out of the common. The poet was giving 'an after-dinner party' in his rooms. The men were mostly from Christ Church; for Landor was intimate, he says, with only one undergraduate of his own College, Trinity. On the opposite side of the quadrangle a Tory and a butt, named Leeds, was entertaining persons whom the Jacobin Landor calls 'servitors and other raff of every description.' The guests at the rival wine-parties began to 'row' each other, Landor says, adding, 'All the time I was only a spectator, for I should have blushed to have had any conversation with them, particularly

out of a window. But my gun was lying on a table in the room, and I had in a back closet some little shot. I proposed, as they had closed the casements, and as the shutters were on the outside, to fire a volley. It was thought a good trick, and accordingly I went into my bedroom and fired.' Mr. Leeds very superfluously complained to the President. Landor adopted the worst possible line of defence, and so the University and this poet parted company.

It seems to have been generally understood that Landor's affair was a boyish escapade. A copious literature is engaged with the subject of Shelley's expulsion. As the story is told by Mr. Hogg, in his delightful book, the *Life of Shelley*, that poet's career at Oxford was a typical one. There are in every generation youths like him, in unworldliness, wildness, and dreaminess, though unlike him, of course, in genius. The divine spark has not touched them, but they, like Shelley, are still of the band whom the world has not tamed. As Mr. Hogg's book is out



READING
THE
NEWDIGATE.

of print, and rare, it would be worth while, did space permit, to reproduce some of his wonderfully life-like and truthful accounts of Oxford as she was in 1810. The University has changed in many ways, and in most ways for the better. Perhaps that old, indolent, and careless Oxford, was better adapted to the life of such an almost unexampled genius as Shelley. When his Eton friends asked him whether he still meant to be 'the Atheist,' that is, the rebel he had been at school, he said, 'No; the college authorities were civil, and left him alone.' Let us remember this when the learned Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Mr. Shairp, calls Shelley 'an Atheist.' Mr. Hogg sometimes complains that undergraduates were left too much alone. But who could have safely advised or securely guided Shelley?

Undergraduates are now more closely looked after, as far as reading goes, than perhaps they like—certainly much more than Shelley would have liked. But when we

turn from study to the conduct of life, is it not plain that no *official* interference can be of real value? Friendship and confidence

In the Garden of Worcester College.

may, and often does, exist between tutors and pupils. There are tutors so happily gifted with sympathy, and with a kind of eternal youth of heart and intellect, that

they become the friends of generation after generation of freshmen. This is fortunate; but who can wonder that middle-aged men, seeing the generations succeed and resemble each other, lose their powers of understanding, of directing, of aiding the young, who are thus cast at once on their own resources? One has occasionally heard clever men complain that they were neglected by their seniors, that their hearts and brains were full of perilous stuff, which no one helped them to unpack. And it is true that modern education, when it meets the impatience of youth, often produces an unhappy ferment in the minds of men. To put it shortly, clever students have to go through their age of *Sturm und Drang*, and they are sometimes disappointed when older people, their tutors, for example, do not help them to weather the storm. It is a tempest in which every one must steer for himself, after all; and Shelley 'was borne darkly, fearfully afar,' into unplumbed seas of thought and experience. When Mr. Hogg complains that his friend

was too much left to himself to study and think as he pleased, let us remember that no one could have helped Shelley. He was better at Oxford without his old Dr. Lind, 'with whom he used to curse George III. after tea.'

There are few chapters in literary history more fascinating than those which tell the story of Shelley at Oxford. We see him entering the hall of University College—a tall, shy stripling, bronzed with the September sun, with long elf-locks. He takes his seat by a stranger, and in a moment holds him spell-bound, while he talks of Plato, and Goethe, and Alfieri, of Italian poetry, and Greek philosophy. Mr. Hogg draws a curious sketch of Shelley at work in his rooms, where seven-shilling pieces were being dissolved in acid in the teacups, where there was a great hole in the floor that the poet had burned with his chemicals. The one-eyed scout, 'the Arimaspian,' must have had a time of tribulation (being a conscientious and fatherly man) with this odd master.

How characteristic of Shelley it was to lend the glow of his fancy to science, to declare that things, not thoughts, mineralogy, not literature, must occupy human minds for the future, and then to leave a lecture on mineralogy in the middle, and admit that 'stones are dull things after all!' Not less Shelleyan was the adventure on Magdalen Bridge, the beautiful bridge of our illustration, from which Oxford, with the sunset behind it, looks like a fairy city of the Arabian Nights —a town of palaces and princesses, rather than of proctors.

'One Sunday we had been reading Plato together so diligently, that the usual hour of exercise passed away unperceived: we sallied forth hastily to take the air for half-an-hour before dinner. In the middle of Magdalen Bridge we met a woman with a child in her arms. Shelley was more attentive at that instant to our conduct in a life that was past, or to come, than to a decorous regulation of the present, according to the established usages of society, in that fleeting moment of eternal duration styled the nineteenth century. With abrupt dexterity he caught hold of the child. The mother, who might well fear that it was about

to be thrown over the parapet of the bridge into the sedgy waters below, held it fast by its long train.

'"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he asked, in a piercing voice, and with a wistful look.'

Shelley and Hogg seem almost to have lived in reality the life of the Scholar Gipsy. In Mr. Arnold's poem, which has made permanent for all time the charm, the sentiment of Oxfordshire scenery, the poet seems to be following the track of Shelley. In Mr. Hogg's memoirs, we hear little of summer; it seems always to have been in winter that the friends took their long rambles, in which Shelley set free, in talk, his inspiration. One thinks of him

> 'in winter, on the causeway chill,
> Where home through flooded fields foot travellers go,'

returning to the supper in Hogg's rooms, to the curious desultory meals, the talk, and the deep slumber by the roaring fire, the small head lying perilously near the flames. One would not linger here over the absurd in-

MAGDALEN
TOWER.

justice of his expulsion from the University. It is pleasant to know, on Mr. Hogg's testimony, that 'residence at Oxford was exceedingly delightful to Shelley, and on all accounts most beneficial.' At Oxford, at least, he seems to have been happy, he who so rarely knew happiness, and who, if he made another suffer, himself suffered so much for others. The memory of Shelley has deeply entered into the sentiment of Oxford. Thinking of him in his glorious youth, and of his residence here, may we not say, with the shepherd in Theocritus, of the divine singer,—

> αἰθ' ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ζωοῖς ἐναρίθμιος ὤφελες εἶμεν
> ὥς τοι ἐγὼν ἐνόμευον ἀν ὥρεα τὰς καλὰς αἶγας
> φωνᾶς εἰσαίων, τυ δ' ὑπὸ δρυσὶν ἢ ὑπὸ πεύκαις
> ἁδὺ μελισδόμενος κατεκέκλισο, θεῖε Κομᾶτα.

'Ah, would that in my days thou hadst been numbered with the living, how gladly on the hills would I have herded thy pretty she-goats, and listened to thy voice, whilst thou, under oaks and pine-trees lying, didst sweetly sing, divine Comatas!'

IX

A GENERAL VIEW

IX

A GENERAL VIEW

We have looked at Oxford life in so many different periods, that now, perhaps, we may regard it, like our artist, as a whole, and take a bird's-eye view of its present condition. We may ask St. Bernard's question, *Whither hast thou come?* a question to which there are so many answers readily given, from within and without the University. It is not probable that the place will vary, in essential character, from that which has all along been its own. We shall have considered Oxford to very little purpose, if it is not plain that the University has been less a home of learning, on the whole, than a microcosm of English intellectual life. At Oxford the men have been think-

ing what England was to think a few months later, and they have been thinking with the passion and the energy of youth. The impulse to thought has not, perhaps, very often been given by any mind or minds within the college walls; it has come from without — from Italy, from France, from London, from a country vicarage, perhaps, from the voice of a wandering preacher. Whencesoever the leaven came, Oxford (being so small, and in a way so homogeneous) has always fermented readily, and promptly distributed the new forces, religious or intellectual, throughout England.

It is characteristic of England that the exciting topics, the questions that move the people most, have always been religious, or deeply tinctured with religion. Conservative as Oxford is, the home of 'impossible causes,' she has always given asylum to new doctrines, to all the thoughts which comfortable people call 'dangerous.' We have seen her agitated by Lollardism, which never quite died, perhaps, till its eager protest

COACHING
THE EIGHT

against the sacerdotal ideal was fused into the fire of the Reformation. Oxford was literally devastated by that movement, and by the Catholic reaction, and then was disturbed for a century and a half by the war of Puritanism, and of Tory Anglicanism. The latter had scarcely had time to win the victory, and to fall into a doze by her pipe of port, when Evangelical religion came to vex all that was moderate, mature, and fond of repose. The revolutionary enthusiasm of Shelley's time was comparatively feeble, because it had no connection with religion; or, at least, no connection with the religion to which our countrymen were accustomed. Between the era of the Revolution and our own day, two religious tempests and one secular storm of thought have swept over Oxford, and the University is at present, if one may say so, like a ship in a heavy swell, the sea looking much more tranquil than it really is.

The Tractarian movement was, of course, the first of the religious disturbances to

which we refer, and much the most powerful.

It is curious to read about that movement in the *Apologia*, for example, of Cardinal Newman. On what singular topics men's minds were bent! what queer survivals of the speculations of the schools agitated them as they walked round Christ Church meadows! They enlightened each other on things transcendental, yet material, on matters unthinkable, and, properly speaking, unspeakable. It is as if they 'spoke with tongues,' which had a meaning then, and for them, but which to us, some forty years later, seem as meaningless as the inscriptions of Easter Island.

This was the shape, the Tractarian movement was the shape, in which the great Romantic reaction laid hold on England and Oxford. The father of all the revival of old doctrines and old rituals in our Church, the originator of that wistful return to things beautiful and long dead, was—Walter Scott. Without him, and his wonderful wand which

made the dry bones of history live, England and France would not have known this picturesque reaction. The stir in these two

Old Episcopal Palace.

From a Drawing by R. Kent Thomas.

countries was curiously characteristic of their genius. In France it put on, in the first place, the shape of art, of poetry, painting

sculpture. Romanticism blossomed in 1830, and bore fruit for ten years. The religious reaction was a punier thing; the great Abbé, who was the Newman of France, was himself unable to remain within the fantastic church that he built out of mediæval ruins. In England, and especially in Oxford, the æsthetic admiration of the Past was promptly transmuted into religion. Doctrines which men thought dead were resuscitated; and from Oxford came, not poetry or painting, but the sermons of Newman, the Tracts, the whole religious force which has transformed and revivified the Church of England. That force is still working, it need hardly be said, in the University of to-day, under conditions much changed, but not without thrills of the old volcanic energy.

Probably the Anglican ideas ceased to be the most powerfully agitating of intellectual forces in Oxford about 1845. A new current came in from Rugby, and the influence of Dr. Arnold and the natural tide of reaction began to run very strong. If we had the

apologiæ of the men who thought most, about the time when Clough was an undergraduate, we should see that the influence of the Anglican divines had become a thing of sentiment and curiosity. The life had not died out of it, but the people whom it could permanently affect were now limited in number and easily recognisable. This form of religion might tempt and attract the strongest men for a while, but it certainly would not retain them. It is by this time a matter of history, though we are speaking of our contemporaries, that the abyss between the *Lives of the English Saints*, and the *Nemesis of Faith*, was narrow, and easily crossed. There was in Oxford that enthusiasm for certain German ideas which had previously been felt for mediæval ideas. Liberalism in history, philosophy, and religion, was the ruling power; and people believed in Liberalism. What is, or used to be, called the Broad Church, was the birth of some ten or fifteen years of Liberalism in religion at Oxford. The *Essays and Reviews* were what the

Tracts had been; and Homeric battles were fought over the income of the Regius Professor of Greek. When that affair was settled Liberalism had had her innings, there was no longer a single dominant intellectual force; but the old storms, slowly subsiding, left the ship of the University lurching and rolling in a heavy swell.

People believed in Liberalism! Their faith worked miracles; and the great University Commission performed many wonderful works, bidding close fellowships be open, and giving all power into the hands of Examiners. Their dispensation still survives; the large examining machine works night and day, in term time and vacation, and yet we are not happy. The age in Oxford, as in the world at large, is the age of collapsed opinions. Never men believed more fervidly in any revelation, than the men of twenty years ago believed in political economy, free trade, open competition, and the reign of Common-sense and of Mr. Cobden. Where is that faith now? Many

CRICKET

IN THE PARK

of the middle-aged disciples of the Church of Common-sense are still in our midst. They say the old sayings, they intone the old responses, but somehow it seems that scepticism is abroad; it seems that the world is wider than their system. Not even open examinations for fellowships and scholarships, not half-a-dozen new schools, and science, and the Museum, and the Slade Professorship of Art, have made Oxford that ideal University which was expected to come down from Heaven like the New Jerusalem.

We have glanced at the history of Oxford to little purpose if we have not learned that it is an eminently discontented place. There is room in colleges and common rooms for both sorts of discontent—the ignoble, which is the child of vanity and weakness; and the noble, which is the unassuaged thirst for perfection. The present result of the last forty years in Oxford is a discontent which is constantly trying to improve the working, and to widen the intellectual influence, of the University. There are more ways than

afford, or is willing, to lag behind; every one is 'gladly learning,' like Chaucer's clerk, as well as earnestly teaching. The knowledge and the industry of these gentlemen is a perpetual marvel to the 'belleletristic trifler.' New studies, like that of Celtic, and of the obscurer Oriental tongues, have sprung up during recent years, have grown into strength and completeness. It is unnecessary to say, perhaps, that these facts dispose of the popular idea about the luxury of the long vacation. During the more part of the long vacation the conscientious teacher must be toiling after the great mundane movement in learning. He must be acquiring the very freshest ideas about Sanscrit and Greek; about the Ogham characters and the Cyprian syllabary; about early Greek inscriptions and the origins of Roman history, in addition to reading the familiar classics by the light of the latest commentaries.

What is the tangible result, and what the gain of all these labours? The answer is

the secret of University discontent. All this accumulated knowledge goes out in teaching, is scattered abroad in lectures, is caught up in note-books, and is poured out, with a difference, in examinations. There is not an amount of original literary work produced by the University which bears any due proportion to the solid materials accumulated. It is just the reverse of Falstaff's case—but one halfpenny-worth of sack to an intolerable deal of bread; but a drop of the spirit of learning to cart-loads of painfully acquired knowledge. The time and energy of men is occupied in amassing facts, in lecturing, and then in eternal examinations. Even if the results are satisfactory on the whole, even if a hundred well-equipped young men are turned out of the examining-machine every year, these arrangements certainly curb individual ambition. If a resident in Oxford is to make an income that seems adequate, he must lecture, examine, and write manuals and primers, till he is grey, and till the energy that might have added something new and

valuable to the acquisitions of the world has departed.

This state of things has produced the demand for the 'Endowment of Research.' It is not necessary to go into that controversy. Englishmen, as a rule, believe that endowed cats catch no mice. They would rather endow a theatre than a *Gelehrter*, if endow something they must. They have a British sympathy with these beautiful, if useless beings, the heads of houses, whom it would be necessary to abolish if Researchers were to get the few tens of thousands they require. Finally, it is asked whether the learned might not find great endowment in economy; for it is a fact that a Frenchman, a German, or an Italian will 'research' for life on no larger income than a simple fellowship bestows.

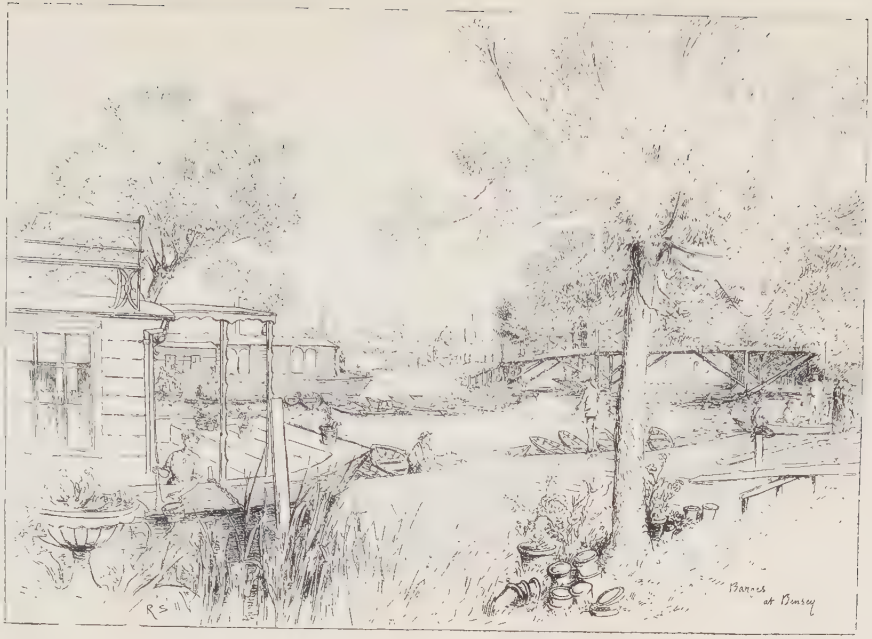
The great obstacle to this 'plain living' is perhaps to be found in the traditional hospitality of Oxford. All her doors are open, and every stranger is kindly entreated by her, and she is like the 'discreet housewife' in Homer,—

εἰδατα πόλλ' ἐπιθεῖσα, χαριζομένη παρεόντων.

In some languages the same word serves for 'stranger' and 'enemy,' but in the Oxford dialect 'stranger' and 'guest' are synonymous. Such is the custom of the place, and it does not make plain living very easy. Some critics will be anxious here to attack the 'æsthetic' movement. One will be expected to say that, after the ideas of Newman, after the ideas of Arnold, and of Jowett, came those of the wicked, the extravagant, the effeminate, the immoral 'Blue China School.' Perhaps there is something in this, but sermons on the subject are rather luxuries than necessaries in the present didactic mood of the Press. 'They were friends of ours, moreover,' as Aristotle says, 'who brought these ideas in'; so the subject may be left with this brief notice. As a piece of practical advice, one may warn the young and ardent advocate of the Endowment of Research that he will find it rather easier to curtail his expenses than to get a subsidy from the Commission.

The last important result of the 'modern spirit' at Oxford, the last stroke of the sanguine Liberal genius, was the removal of the celibate condition from certain fellowships. One can hardly take a bird's-eye view of Oxford without criticising the consequences of this innovation. The topic, however, is, for a dozen reasons, very difficult to handle. One reason is, that the experiment has not been completely tried. It is easy enough to marry on a fellowship, a tutorship, and a few small miscellaneous offices. But how will it be when you come to forty years, or even fifty? No materials exist which can be used by the social philosopher who wants an answer to this question. In the meantime, the common rooms are perhaps more dreary than of old, in many a college, for lack of the presence of men now translated to another place. As to the 'society' of Oxford, that is, no doubt, very much more charming and vivacious than it used to be in the days when Tony Wood was the surly champion of celibacy.

Looking round the University, then, one finds in it an activity that would once have seemed almost feverish, a highly conscientious industry, doing that which its hand finds to do, but not absolutely certain that it is not neglecting nobler tasks. Perhaps Oxford has never been more busy with its own work, never less distracted by religious politics. If we are to look for a less happy sign, we shall find it in the tendency to run up 'new buildings.' The Colleges are landowners: they must suffer with other owners of real property in the present depression; they will soon need all their savings. That is one reason why they should be chary of building; another is, that the fellows of a college at any given moment are not necessarily endowed with architectural knowledge and taste. They should think twice, or even thrice, before leaving on Oxford for many centuries the uncomely mark of an unfortunate judgment.



ON THE
UPPER RIVER.

X

UNDERGRADUATE LIFE
CONCLUSION

X

UNDERGRADUATE LIFE—CONCLUSION

A HUNDRED pictures have been drawn of undergraduate life at Oxford, and a hundred caricatures. Novels innumerable introduce some Oxford scenes. An author generally writes his first romance soon after taking his degree; he writes about his own experience and his own memories; he mixes his ingredients at will and tints according to fancy. This is one of the two reasons why pictures of Oxford, from the undergraduate side, are generally false. They are either drawn by an aspirant who is his own hero, and who idealises himself and his friends, or they are designed by ladies who have read *Verdant Green*, and

who, at some period, have paid a flying visit to Cambridge. An exhaustive knowledge of *Verdant Green*, and a hasty view of the Fitzwilliam Museum and 'the backs of the Colleges' (which are to Cambridge what the Docks are to Liverpool), do not afford sufficient materials for an accurate sketch of Oxford. The picture daubed by the emancipated undergraduate who dabbles in fiction, is as unrecognisable. He makes himself and his friends too large, too noisy, too bibulous, too learned, too extravagant, too pugnacious. They seem to stride down the High, prodigious, disproportionate figures, like the kings of Egypt on the monuments, overshadowing the crowd of dons, tradesmen, bargees, and cricket-field or river-side cads. Often one dimly recognises the scenes, and the acquaintances of years ago, in University novels. The mildest of men suddenly pose as heroes of the Guy Livingstone type, fellows who 'screw up' timid dons, box with colossal watermen, and read all night with wet towels bound round

their fevered brows. These sketches are all nonsense. Men who do these things do not write about them; and men who write about them never did them.

There is yet another cause which increases the difficulty of describing undergraduate life with truth. There are very many varieties of undergraduates, who have very various ways of occupying and amusing themselves. A steady man that reads his five or six hours a-day, and takes his pastime chiefly on the river, finds that his path scarcely ever crosses that of him who belongs to the Bullingdon Club, hunts thrice a-week, and rarely dines in hall. Then the 'pale student,' who is hard at work in his rooms or in the Bodleian all day, and who has only two friends, out-college men, with whom he takes walks and tea,—he sees existence in a very different aspect. The Union politician, who is for ever hanging about his club, dividing the house on questions of blotting-paper and quill pens, discussing its affairs at breakfast, intriguing for the place of Librarian, writing

rubbish in the suggestion-book, to him Oxford is only a soil carefully prepared for the growth of that fine flower, the Union. He never encounters the undergraduate who haunts billiard-rooms and shy taverns, who buys jewelry for barmaids, and who is admired for the audacity with which he smuggled a fox-terrier into college in a brown-paper parcel. There are many other species of undergraduate, scarcely more closely resembling each other in manners and modes of thought than the little Japanese student resembles the metaphysical Scotch exhibitioner, or than the hereditary war minister of Siam (whose career, though brief, was vivacious) resembled the Exeter Sioux, a half-reclaimed savage, who disappeared on the war-path after failing to scalp the Junior Proctor. When The Wet Blanket returned to his lodge in the land of Sitting Bull, he doubtless described Oxford life in his own way to the other Braves, while the squaws hung upon his words and the papooses played around.

THE EIGHTS
FROM
FOLLY BRIDGE.

His account would vary, in many ways, from that of

> 'Whiskered Tomkins from the hall
> Of seedy Magdalene.'

And he, again, would not see Oxford life steadily, and see it whole, as a more cultivated and polished undergraduate might. Thus there are countless pictures of the works and ways of undergraduates at the University. The scene is ever the same—boat-races and foot-ball matches, scouts, schools, and proctors, are common to all,—but in other respects the sketches must always vary, must generally be one-sided, and must often seem inaccurate.

It appears that a certain romance is attached to the three years that are passed between the estate of the freshman and that of the Bachelor of Arts. These years are spent in a kind of fairyland, neither quite within nor quite outside of the world. College life is somewhat, as has so often been said, like the old Greek city life. For three years men are in the possession

of what the world does not enjoy—leisure; and they are supposed to be using that leisure for the purposes of perfection. They are making themselves and their characters. We are all doing that, all the days of our lives; but at the Universities there is, or is expected to be, more deliberate and conscious effort. Men are in a position to 'try all things' before committing themselves to any. Their new-found freedom does not merely consist in the right to poke their own fires, order their own breakfasts, and use their own cheque-books. These things, which make so much impression on the mind at first, are only the outward signs of freedom. The boy who has just left school, and the thoughtless life of routine in work and play, finds himself in the midst of books, of thought, and discussion. He has time to look at all the common problems of the hour, and yet he need not make up his mind hurriedly, nor pledge himself to anything. He can flirt with young opinions, which come to him with candid faces, fresh

THE
UNIVERSITY
BOATHOUSE.

as Queen Entelechy in Rabelais, though, like her, they are as old as human thought. Here first he meets Metaphysics, and perhaps falls in love with that enchantress, 'who sifts time with a fine large blue silk sieve.' There is hardly a clever lad but fancies himself a metaphysician, and has designs on the Absolute. Most fall away very early from this, their first love; and they follow Science down one of her many paths, or concern themselves with politics, and take a side which, as a rule, is the opposite of that to which they afterwards adhere. Thus your Christian Socialist becomes a Court preacher, and puts his trust in princes; the young Tory of the old type will lapse into membership of a School Board. It is the time of liberty, and of intellectual attachments too fierce to last long.

Unluckily there are subjects more engrossing, and problems more attractive, than politics, and science, art, and pure metaphysics. The years of undergraduate life are those in which, to many men, the

enigmas of religion present themselves. They bring their boyish faith into a place (if one may quote Pantagruel's voyage once more) like the Isle of the Macraeones. On that mournful island were confusedly heaped the ruins of altars, fanes, temples, shrines, sacred obelisks, barrows of the dead, pyramids, and tombs. Through the ruins wandered, now and again, the half-articulate words of the Oracle, telling how Pan was dead. Oxford, like the Isle of the Macraeones, is a lumber-room of ruinous philosophies, decrepit religions, forlorn beliefs. The modern system of study takes the pupil through all the philosophic and many of the religious systems of belief, which, in the distant and the nearer past, have been fashioned by men, and have sheltered men for a day. You are taught to mark each system crumbling, to watch the rise of the new temple of thought on its ruins, and to see that also perish, breached by assaults from without or sapped by the slow approaches of Time. This is not the place in

LAWN
TENNIS
AT OXFORD.

which we can well discuss the merits of modern University education. But no man can think of his own University days, or look with sympathetic eyes at those who fill the old halls and rooms, and not remember, with a twinge of the old pain, how religious doubt insists on thrusting itself into the colleges. And it is fair to say that, for this, no set of teachers or tutors is responsible. It is the modern historical spirit that must be blamed, that too clear-sighted vision which we are all condemned to share of the past of the race. We are compelled to look back on old philosophies, on India, Athens, Alexandria, and on the schools of men who thought so hard within our own ancient walls. We are compelled to see that their systems were only plausible, that their truths were but half-truths. It is the long vista of failure thus revealed which suggests these doubts that weary, and torture, and embitter the naturally happy life of discussion, amusement, friendship, sport, and study. These doubts, after all, dwell on the threshold of

modern existence, and on the threshold—namely, at the Universities—men subdue them, or evade them.

The amusements of the University have been so often described that little need be said of them here. Unhealthy as the site of Oxford is, the place is rather fortunately disposed for athletic purposes. The river is the chief feature in the scenery, and in the life of amusement. From the first day of term, in October, it is crowded with every sort of craft. The freshman admires the golden colouring of the woods and Magdalen tower rising, silvery, through the blue autumnal haze. As soon as he appears on the river, his weight, strength, and 'form' are estimated. He soon finds himself pulling in a college 'challenge four,' under the severe eye of a senior cox, and by the middle of December he has rowed his first race, and is regularly entered for a serious vocation. The thorough-going boating-man is the creature of habit. Every day, at the same hour, after a judicious luncheon, he is seen,

in flannels, making for the barge. He goes out, in a skiff, or a pair, or a four-oar, or to a steeplechase through the hedges when Oxford, as in our illustration, is under water. The illustration represents Merton, and the writer recognises his old rooms, with the Venetian blinds which Mr. Ruskin denounced. Chief of all the boating-man goes out in an eight, and rows down to Iffley, with the beautiful old mill and Norman church, or accomplishes 'the long course.' He rows up again, lounges in the barge, rows down again (if he has only pulled over the short course), and goes back to dinner in hall. The table where men sit who are in training is a noisy table, and the athletes verge on 'bear-fighting' even in hall. A statistician might compute how many steaks, chops, pots of beer, and of marmalade, an orthodox man will consume in the course of three years. He will, perhaps, pretend to suffer from the monotony of boating shop, boating society, and broad-blown boating jokes. But this appears to be a harmless affectation. The old break-

fasts, wines, and suppers, the honest boating slang, will always have an attraction for him. The summer term will lose its delight when the May races are over. Boating-men are the salt of the University, so steady, so well disciplined, so good-tempered are they. The sport has nothing selfish or personal in it; men row for their College, or their University; not like running-men, who run, as it were, each for his own hand. Whatever may be his work in life, a boating-man will stick to it. His favourite sport is not expensive, and nothing can possibly be less luxurious. He is often a reading man, though it may be doubted whether 'he who runs may read' as a rule. Running is, perhaps, a little overdone, and Strangers' cups are or lately were, given with injudicious generosity. To the artist's eye, however, few sights in modern life are more graceful than the University quarter-of-a-mile race. Nowhere else, perhaps, do you see figures so full of a Hellenic grace and swiftness.

The cream of University life is the first

WAITING
FOR THE
COX.

summer term. Debts, as yet, are not; the schools are too far off to cast their shadow over the unlimited enjoyment, which begins when lecture is over, at one o'clock. There are so many things to do,—

'When wickets are bowled and defended,
When Isis is glad with the eights,
When music and sunset are blended,
When Youth and the Summer are mates,
When freshmen are heedless of "Greats,"
When note-books are scribbled with rhyme,
Ah! these are the hours that one rates
Sweet hours, and the fleetest of Time!'

There are drags at every college gate to take college teams down to Cowley. There is the beautiful scenery of the 'stripling Thames' to explore; the haunts of the immortal 'Scholar Gipsy,' and of Shelley, and of Clough's Piper, who—

'Went in his youth and the sunshine rejoicing, to Nuneham and Godstowe.'

Further afield men seldom go in summer, there is so much to delight and amuse in

Oxford.[1] What day can be happier than that of which the morning is given (after a lively college breakfast, or a 'commonising' with a friend) to study, while cricket occupies the afternoon, till music and sunset fill the grassy stretches above Iffley, and the college eights flash past among cheering and splashing? Then there is supper in the cool halls, darkling, and half-lit up; and after supper talk, till the birds twitter in the elms, and the roofs and the chapel spire look unfamiliar in the blue of dawn. How long the days were then! almost like the days of childhood; how distinct is the impression all experience used to make! In later seasons Care is apt to mount the college staircase, and the 'oak' which Shelley blessed cannot keep out this visitor. She comes in many a shape—as debt, and doubt, and melancholy; and often she comes as bereavement. Life and her claims wax importunate; to many men the schools mean a cruel and wearing

[1] A very pleasing account of the scenery near Oxford appeared in the *Cornhill* for September, 1879.

IFFLEY
MILL.

anxiety, out of all proportion to the real importance of academic success. We cannot see things as they are, and estimate their value, in youth; and if pleasures are more keen then, grief is more hopeless, doubt more desolate, uncertainty more gnawing, than in later years, when we have known and survived a good deal of the worst of mortal experience. Often on men still in their pupilage the weight of the first misfortunes falls heavily; the first touch of Dame Fortune's whip is the most poignant. We cannot recover the first summer term; but it has passed into ourselves and our memories, into which Oxford, with her beauty and her romance, must also quickly pass. He is not to be envied who has known and does not love her. Where her children have quarrelled with her the fault is theirs, not hers. They have chosen the accidental evils to brood on, in place of acquiescing in her grace and charm. These are crowded and hustled out of modern life; the fever and the noise of our struggles fill

all the land, leaving still, at the Universities, peace, beauty, and leisure.

If any word in these papers has been unkindly said, it has only been spoken, I hope, of the busybodies who would make Oxford cease to be herself; who would rob her of her loveliness and her repose.

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